THE INCARNATION AND PERSONALITY

H. A. WATSON, D.D.

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THE INCARNATION AND PERSONALITY

CHAPTER I

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INCARNATION

The importance of the Incarnation is recognized, but not its full value. An indication of this is afforded by the current estimation of the relative values of the contributions of S. John and S. Paul to Christianity. It is perhaps natural that the practical side of religion should make a more impressive and a more universal appeal, but to separate practice from principle is a dangerous method, because it is inherently unsound. An attempt is here made to shew the bearing of the Incarnation upon Personality—that is, to establish its psychological basis as a determining influence on human nature and character. This is to present Christ not merely as a fact, but above all as an influence, not as conferring an external favour upon us, but as establishing an internal relation.

Our personality has been directly affected by the actual participation of God in human life: it is not merely capable of being so affected. Granted that the humanity of Christ tends to elucidate our conception of God, it must also be recognized that it has conferred on us the power of more sympathetic conception. It is a fact that is open to our conceptive faculty, but it is also a fact that has

quickened our conceptive faculty. It is a question of our potentiality, not merely of our experience. That being so, it becomes important to consider the personality that so affects us and the personality that is so affected, otherwise we shall not understand the relation set up.

We have to consider what the personality of Christ was, and is, not merely what He did. This twofold consideration enters into the question of the relation of the Atonement to the Incarnation. When S. Paul seems to lay great stress on the value of faith, he is assumed to be asserting the primary importance of the Atonement. True, he does do that, but what is he implying? Surely we have to go farther back and inquire what object of faith he postulates. The answer perhaps will be, Faith in Christ. Then comes the question, In Christ as He is, or in Christ for what He has done? Salvation, justification, sanctification, will perhaps be the reply. But then we are brought up by S. Paul's constant insistence on the Resurrection, and that surely asserts what He was rather than what He did. His resurrection is dependent on the conditioning factor of His personality, it is the outcome of His Divinity asserting itself over His humanity, and, by this assertion, affecting our humanity.

The relation of the Atonement to the Incarnation is determined by our view of the humanity of Christ. The Atonement emphasizes His humanity because it satisfies a human need. By the help of Divinity, it is true, but still in the sphere of humanity. The Incarnation requires the co-operation of the two factors in a more insistent way. Its relation to human life is only effective so far as it expresses Divine action. It is the act of God applied in a human connexion. Its efficacy is bound up with its Divine conception. The need of an offering for sin is a human need, however complete a part God may take in satisfying it, but the need of a restoration of human nature requires direct Divine influence

to effect it, corresponding to the direct Divine influence given in man's original creation. Thus in the Incarnation God's personality is brought into closer relation with man's personality than it is even in the Atonement. The Atonement is rather a presentation of God's interest in man, whereas the Incarnation presents both the interest and the communication of God. In both God intervenes in human life, but in the one less emphatically than in the other.

The question has been partly obscured by the variety of the revelation. Practical considerations appeal to practical men, and the energetic enthusiasm of S. Paul has overridden in their estimation the more illuminating testimony of S. John. And yet at the root of the earnestness of the great missioner lies the confidence of the great mystic. The one went out into God's world to persuade God's creatures, the other lay on Jesus's breast and absorbed the secret of His personality. The one expressed his faith in action—he had the faith, else he could not have manifested the action : the other expressed his faith in love, and fed his faith on growing love. The personality of Christ influenced both, but in S. John we see even more clearly than in S. Paul the enabling spiritual power of the Incarnate Lord.

And the question is, How does this affect our estimate of personality in determining the relation of God to man, of man to God ? At least it sets us on the inquiry into the significance of personality in connexion with the theory of the Incarnation. The history of the early Church teems with indications of the importance attaching to the doctrine, for on no point was definition more strenuously courted or contested. But the question tended to be decided in much fuller reference to God's nature than to man's. It was rather asked, What is Jesus ? than What are we ? It was settled or evaded in terms of Divine application rather than of human relation. Pelagianism did indeed raise the question

of human nature, but Arianism depreciated the Divinity of Christ. And, even if Gnosticism is to be regarded as " a direction of thought, not a sect of believers nor a system of doctrines " (Cunningham, *The Churches of Asia*, p. 87), still it expressed a depreciation of Christ, now under the form of Docetism, now under the form of Ebionitism. The four test principles which form the *raison d'être* of the four great Councils, *ἀληθῶς*, *τελέως*, *ἀδιαιρέτως*, *ἀσυγχύτως*, keep His two natures quite balanced, while they affirm the perfection of each, and so they combat the contentions of Arius, Apollinarius, Nestorius, and Eutyches.

This, it may be said, was a natural and reasonable attitude for the Church to take up in times when man's knowledge of God was a more vital need than his knowledge of himself. In her struggle to maintain the principle of Monotheism, she naturally laid stress on the nature of God rather than on the nature of man. But in our day man has grown more introspective, and thus the question of relation becomes more pressing. Moreover the investigation of human nature has become a science, and psychology cannot treat religion as an alien sphere. Nor can religion ignore psychology. Hence the knowledge of God must be regarded as involving the knowledge of man.

We may, however, follow the example of the Church in considering the Incarnation first. For, although human nature has received high honour in being taken into God, it is God Who has the gift to bestow. In writing the history of the Church, historians have taken pains to point out the fitness of the time at which Christ appeared. They have insisted on this by urging the adaptability of the conditions of the Roman Empire to the spread of Christianity. But the need of the individual may also be urged. Philosophy appeals to the individual rather than to the mass, and philosophy had failed to satisfy the individual. At the same time Stoicism

had established, at least as a reasonable principle, the equality of man, and had set forth in the principle of brotherhood the claims of man upon man. Thus the appeal to personality found the time ripe, and not only was the world ready for Christianity but the individual himself was ready. The appeal was made to him in an unexpected form. The human spirit is naturally prepared for the reception of God. It asks the question, Who art Thou?—it asked the question in primitive times—and the answer is 'I Am.' That was the answer given by Christ Himself, and it particularly appears in the account given of Him by S. John. It is, in the first instance, a Jewish appeal. But the selection of the Jewish race involves no implication of partiality. It is simply a question of fitness. Whatever the failure of the nation, its fitness still remained. One factor in the fitness is the Monotheistic idea. Neither Pantheism nor Polytheism could afford the requisite nidus for the Incarnation seed. There it would have been dispersed, dissipated, evaporated. Another factor is the craving for righteousness, which Judaism constantly preserved in the definiteness of its law, in the sense of sin expressed and demanded by its Prophets, in the devotional attitude of its Psalms. It may, of course, be said that the Jewish attitude towards religion was a national attitude. But the tendency of the nation was to centralize itself, as appeared in its concentration upon one person, the Messiah. Whereas God was originally regarded in relation to the nation, this relation gradually came to be centred upon an individual. The dealings of God with the Messiah are really typical of His individual dealings, and the kingdom of heaven, however universal, makes an individual and a personal appeal. Man is required to save his soul—his soul, in which his personality consists.

If we may assume that the Incarnation is a process that affects the whole human personality, it becomes

necessary to investigate the nature of that personality. We limit the sphere in which the Incarnation works, if we limit the soul to a section of the personality.

An objection may be raised on the score of the fundamental distinction between man and God. How can two such opposite natures be joined together? Even if they act together, what possible balance can be preserved? There is a natural revolt against such an idea, and a revolt of reason. But this is to forget the original conception of man. According to the Jewish idea, the breath of God played its part in the creation of man, and the spiritual character of the creature was assured. Thus the union of the two natures was not intrinsically impossible. Philosophy does not preclude its possibility, when it asserts that the end of a reasonable being is to express his own consciousness as the expression of the supreme consciousness that fills the world. For this implies the union of the spiritual with the material, and is in itself an acknowledgment of the union of man with God.

Still the Incarnation goes beyond this, because it involves the idea of a closer union and a permanent union. It has an intrinsic value, and it has besides a value to man that is both subjective and objective. But its possibility has to be considered before we can determine its influence. When it has been established as a fact, then we can consider it as an influence. It is the Gospel of S. John that deals with it from both these points of view. This is not to say that the Synoptists do not imply the Incarnation, but rather that they describe the activity of Christ and leave His nature and character to be inferred from that. S. John, on the other hand, deliberately applies himself to the consideration of His nature and character. He states what Christ claimed to be, he gives the status in virtue of which He spoke and acted. He shows the close relation of Christ to God. His view of the Incarnation is expressed in his use

of the special name which he applies to Christ—the Word. That it seems to carry its own meaning with it is implied by his single use of it, for it occurs only in the Prologue, and never appears in the actual Gospel. It is a description of our Lord as He was before His appearance in the world, and it is used in connexion with His Incarnation: "the Word became flesh." That carries with it the idea of His humanity, while it is also used to express His Divinity, "the Word was in relation to God, the Word was God." The exact meaning of 'Word' is the expression of thought, and so we may take the designation to imply the emergence of the Son of God as Son, the eternal effecting of His existence. God spake the word and it was done, God expressed Himself and the Word was. Hence the expression in S. John's Gospel by which Jesus constantly designates Himself, 'I am.'

Now we notice that if there is any quality which needs, to prove its existence, an object on which to spend itself, it is the quality of love. The existence of the Son of God is the necessary outcome of God's quality of love. Alone in the Godhead, He Whom we call the Father would have had no object of His love *qua* God. The existence of the Son is the proof that God is Love, the Divine proof that God is Divine Love. But further it is necessary that He should have creatures on whom to lavish His love. Otherwise His love would have been limited to a sphere within His own existence. Therefore He created human beings, whom He might love outside His own existence. But a further requirement was the return of His love, for love is not complete love if it is only exercised on one side. This establishes the need of the Incarnation, for, when it was found that humanity fell short of a sufficient return of love, means were taken to remedy the deficiency. Humanity was put on a different footing, a fresh persuasion was offered to the human race. Its freewill was still guarded, but it was directed: a

deeper basis was provided, together with a higher end. If the highest good is the expression of self-consciousness, then the self-consciousness is raised by the presentation of a higher end. But if at the same time the self-consciousness is raised in itself, the end to which it devotes itself will become more worthy. Thus personality and the end of personality react upon one another, and a concurrent advance is made in both.

The contention is that the Incarnation has elevated human nature by uniting it to God in Christ, that the Incarnation acts not only by way of instruction, not only by way of example, but as a dynamic force. It means that in the economy of God fresh conditions were made in the relation between God and man. This is not to say that the original conditions were a failure on God's side, but that the necessary condition of human free-will affected the relation on the human side. It does not say that they were bound to be a failure, it only states the historical, ethical, spiritual fact. It may of course be argued that God ought to have foreseen this, but the answer to that is, How do we know that He did not foresee it? Even I, with my limited view, may offer some one a choice of action, and may foresee the choice that he will make. My foresight does not interfere with his freedom of action: he is not obliged to make the particular choice, I do not force him to it. But when it was proved by actual experience that men did not make the right choice, though they ought to have made it, then the remedy was found. They failed by human weakness, therefore their humanity received an additional strength.

Christ in the Gospels constantly calls Himself the Son of man. The expression is a difficult one, but its significance is heightened by the fact that it occurs in the New Testament only on the lips of the One Whom it served to designate. Its use by S. Stephen is to be understood as representing his realization of the position from our Lord's point of

view. The inference is that its significance is specially established by Himself, and in Himself. It is taken to mean the representative of humanity Whom God will exalt over the world. "Jesus called Himself Son of man as that member of the human race . . . whom God will make Lord of the world" (Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*, p. 265). It connects Him with both humanity and Divinity, for it implies His humanity and it proclaims His Divinity. As God and man He is Lord of the world. Dalman contends that it cannot be proved to have been attached by Jesus to Himself before S. Peter's direct acknowledgment of His Messiahship. He was then, having received this acknowledgment, ready to accept His right of sovereignty over the world. The question arises, What is this sovereignty? Is it in any way to be regarded as the position of one who is *primus inter pares*? It seems to link Him with humanity as One Who not only benefits but influences humanity. It establishes Him as a re-creator of human nature. This would account for the principle of regeneration in baptism. The child, united to Christ, partakes of the benefits derived from Christ's inherence in human nature. His natural rights are officially recognized and confirmed. Potentially his soul is saved by virtue of his definite incorporation into the mystical body of Christ.

This is the relation of the Incarnation to personality. The Incarnation is an adaptation of Divine personality to meet the requirements of human personality. But this adaptation reacts upon human personality, and presents it as a more favourable material for the working of Divine influence. It produces a development of human nature, not merely a potentiality of development. That human nature may develop still further is involved in the nature of the case, but an advance has already been made.

The body and the spirit are so intricately connected

in human nature that it is impossible that the influence should be exerted upon one apart from the other. The influence of the Incarnation affects the soul, which is the balance of the two. Its influence is in fact upon personality, neither material only nor spiritual only, but psychical. We are never asked to save our bodies or our spirits, but our souls. As it is impossible to separate Christ's human nature from His Divine nature, so it is impossible, in any religious relation, to separate the body from the spirit. As the work of the Son of man proceeded in union with the work of the Son of God, so our religious tendency is determined in the spheres of the body and the spirit taken together. Union of man with God is union of our personality with Christ's. No wonder that the Church took such pains to define the Person of Christ.

CHAPTER II

DIVINE PERSONALITY

A GREAT deal of discussion has taken place on the meaning of the name 'Word,' applied to our Lord by S. John. An attempt has been made to identify it with the name 'Wisdom,' in the Wisdom literature. But it is not clear why the term 'Word' should be applied to represent Wisdom. Wisdom denotes a quality, Word denotes an expression, an explanation. Wisdom is objective, Word is subjective. Both may refer to the same Person, but they cannot both express an interchangeable relation. In other words, the relation of Wisdom to humanity cannot be identical with the relation of the Word to humanity. In fact, the difference between them is a difference of relation. Wisdom denotes a quality of God, the Word expresses a double relation of God to God and of God to man. The Word was *πρὸς θεόν*, says S. John, and he also says, "The Word became flesh."

The question is often raised whether the personality of Christ presented in S. John's Gospel is really the same personality as is presented in the Synoptic Gospels. Does S. John describe a personality created by his own imagination, idealized by himself? What is the worth of that personality, so idealized? Is it a beautiful picture or is it real? It is curious that he never repeats his first description of Jesus Christ, given in the Prologue to his Gospel. Did he repent of it? Did he consider it inadequate? Or is his picture of Christ, contained in the body of his Gospel, a working out of the idea of the Prologue? Does the Word pervade the Gospel, or evaporate as the

Gospel proceeds? It is inconsistent to put forward a character of a drama, the leading character, and then change its characteristics as the drama is elaborated. On the other hand, why drop the defining term, if its implications remain? We are recalled to the meaning of the term. We ask ourselves whether the meaning does not depend upon the presentation of the character. We draw upon the whole Gospel for the meaning of the Word. And we find there Wisdom indeed, but still more Reality.

Loisy has called attention to the symbolism of S. John's Gospel. For him the Divine, eternal and transcendent reality of religion is sensibly and figuratively expressed in the Gospel history. He will not allow that S. John has created the reality, but only that he has expressed it in his own way. S. John's object was to set forth the Word of God, because he was persuaded that Jesus Christ's object was to set forth God. The field that Christ chose was humanity, the field that S. John chose was as much of humanity as he could reach. He believed that Christ's reach extended to the whole of humanity. He did not think that the whole of humanity would be influenced, but he thought that the whole of humanity was involved. Not all would be influenced, because each exercised the Divine right of free-will. Some could not or would not, could not because they would not, read the meaning of the Word. At any rate he would give everyone the chance of reading it. He knew what the Word of God was to him. He knew what the Word of God was not to some others. Well, then, he would try to explain Him to them. He would take facts, and expose their reality. He would take life, and expose its reality. Nay, more, he would expose the Reality of Life, the reality that was Life. They groped and stumbled—he would show them the Way.

It is almost impossible to define the Word. But it is not impossible to define humanity, because all human beings know something about it. They are, each one of them, a fraction of humanity, and experi-

ence and feeling are to a certain extent a definition. Well, says S. John, the Word of God has entered into the experience and feeling of humanity. He stands above humanity, but He projects Himself within it. Humanity is on one side of it alien to spirituality, but spirituality is part of its constituted nature. Spirituality is the more essential part of its nature, and spirituality is intended to be its tendency and its highest good. God would never create beings absolutely unlike Himself; at least, if creation was the necessary assertion of His existence, it would include likeness to Himself. The Word of God must involve likeness to God, the Incarnate Word of God must involve that same likeness. Thus the Incarnation is a definite lift towards spirituality. For it not only reminds us of our likeness to God, but it also accentuates that likeness. It helps us to effectualize the likeness. It is not concerned only with facts but also with possibilities. The Incarnation has not merely pointed out the relation between God and man, it has rather improved the relation of man to God. It has raised the standard of humanity, it has raised the character of humanity. It has spiritualized humanity, already spiritual, in a higher degree. For we have to remember that it does not involve God's becoming a man, but God's becoming man. By taking manhood into God, Christ not only affected His own nature, but humanity in general. He standardized humanity. We too often think of Him as an example—a conception which is true enough, as far as it goes—but the essential conception of the Incarnation regards it as a transformation. It carries with it a revaluation of human life. It does not merely show what God was prepared to do for humanity, what humanity might expect to gain, but it has definitely increased the value of humanity. Too often the Incarnation has been regarded as an external act of God, influencing indeed the fortunes of the human race, but with a purely external influence. But, as the Te Deum

expresses it, "when Thou wast about to take man upon Thee to deliver, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb." [1] This implies that the assumption of humanity involved in itself deliverance, rather than that it provided deliverance as an external outcome. And so S. John couples with his declaration "the Word became flesh" the further announcement "He tabernacled in us," which gives the Incarnation an entirely personal application. It connects the personality of God with human personality. S. John does not merely say that He became a man, or that He became man, but he further asserts His presence in humanity. Thus the act becomes one of far-reaching importance. It may be true that the Son of man had not where to lay His head, but it is not a fact that He had no place of abode in humanity. Indeed, to all that received Him He gave the right to become children of God, and this is no mere complimentary title. It implies a change of nature, an internal change of character, which would persist: it implies permanence, all the more that it depended on acceptance.

What we need to understand about the Incarnation is not only its dynamic force but its effective influence. Not what it is able to do, but what it *has* done. It is too often supposed that the Word of God brings His own manhood to the aid of ours, without its being recognized that the influence of the Incarnation passes directly into our humanity. His humanity is within us rather than exercised upon us from without. The Incarnation has already affected our personality at the time when we received our personality. It is not the one Divine and human personality that we have alone to consider, it is the fact that our own human personality has already become Divine. When the Word promises to abide in us, we are to accept the promise as already effective, not merely future. It is rather recognition of this Divine abiding than expectation of it that is in

[1] Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem (N.B. *hominem*, not *virum*).

question. The Incarnation presupposes the solidarity of humanity.

S. John says in his Gospel " as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God "—this right is now inherent in our humanity. The Incarnation does not remove free-will, but it gives free-will its necessary scope of action. The right to become children of God is now vested in humanity, the human nature which men are able to develop has been placed upon a more secure footing. The material which human beings can use has been improved. The field of their work has been made fairer. They can become better, because they have been actually made better.

The Incarnation has raised moral values. When the Son of God became Son of man, He began the process of converting the children of man into children of God. He set on foot a process of reconstruction. We must not forget the method of original creation. To the Jews the human relation to God was already spiritual, and human personality depended on that spiritual relation, for it was the breathing of God into matter that constituted a living soul. This has a twofold bearing upon the Incarnation. It suggests an inquiry into the personality of the Word, as well as into the personality of man. It demands of us the investigation of the personality of the Word, Divine and human, as well as of our personality. What was the relation of the Divine personality to the human personality within the Word ? The Word is the expression of God, but He is also the expression of man. Whatever view we may take of the origin of the term ' Word,' we cannot neglect the fact that it implies ' meaning.' He shows us both the meaning of God and the meaning of man.

God had a very real meaning to the Jews. But their explanation was always coloured by the anthropomorphic view. They reasoned from man to God rather than from God to man. The Incarnation has

emphasized the theomorphic view of man. It begins with God and thence passes on to man. We have to get a definite idea of God, apart from ourselves, and from this we have to deduce an idea of ourselves. We have to regard humanity through the Divine mirror. It is the object of S. John's Gospel to shew God to us, and by that means to shew us ourselves. Just as in Platonism we learn reality from a study of the Ideas, so in Christianity we learn humanity from a study of God.

The story of the life and character of Christ opens up to us a view of His personality. It shews us what He was, not merely what He did. The Synoptists preferred the method of setting forth His words and actions, S. John prefers the method of describing Himself. But he does not neglect His words and actions. They are testimony to his main thesis, but they are not the matter of his treatise. They elucidate, but His nature and character are the light. It has been objected against S. John that he does not definitely present the Word in his treatise, that he has relegated that term to his prologue. The objection is verbal rather than real. It is like putting a certain character into a list of *dramatis personæ*: it is not necessary to attach the special label to the character whenever it appears. It is enough if the character answers all through to the label. That it does so in this case is obvious to any intelligent reader of the treatise. All through S. John's Gospel the Word expresses both God and man.

It has been objected to this Gospel that it makes no mention of the Virgin birth. But S. John is insisting on the Divinity rather than the humanity of the Word. He is not concerned to explain how He became flesh, he merely states the fact. The Virgin Mary is there, in the book, but her position is not defined. Probably S. John felt no need to define it. He takes the mystery for granted, just as he takes the institution of the Eucharist for granted. "Unless ye see signs and wonders, ye

will not believe." "I am the light of the world." He does not explain this from the human point of view. The author requires faith, as his Divine subject required faith. And yet the word 'faith' does not occur in his Gospel. But he does tell us that those who have the right to become children of God were not born of the will of a man, and we may infer that the Son of God, to him, was free from the same restriction.

But still we have to inquire into the personality of the Word. Clearly He is to S. John both the Son of God and the Son of man. Even on earth he regards Him as being in heaven, according to one reading: "No one has ascended into heaven, except He that came down from heaven, the Son of man, who is in heaven." His presence on earth does not preclude His presence in heaven. Here we have the idea of the constant retention of His Divinity throughout His earthly existence. The Divine personality of the Word, Who was (constantly) in relation to God, persists in His relation to humanity. And yet He had a human personality, for He became flesh, and it is impossible to imagine that as far as His flesh was concerned His personality was merely Divine. In this light are to be interpreted our Lord's many references to His doing the will of God: it is in His human personality that He is subject to the will of God. S. John is no Docetist, he represents the crucifixion as an actual fact.

But how is His human personality related to His Divine personality? He says that He has overcome the world, He constantly describes Himself as eternity of existence—"I am": and yet in reference to Lazarus we are told that Jesus wept. Humanity is there as well as Divinity. Personality is made up of two component parts, spirit and body: how is the Divine participation in these two parts to be assigned? Our Lord says that He lays down His soul (His personality) for the sheep. He says, in reference to the thought of death, "Now is My soul [My person-

ality] troubled." In the first case there is an inclusion of His Divine nature, for that is concerned in His sacrifice, and in the second case, which seems to refer to His human nature, there is the same inclusion, for He goes on to speak of His uplifting out of the earth, whereby He will draw all to Himself, which is not merely a human act. The question is whether we can consider His personality as including both Divine and human elements. If so, it seems as though we too have received a Divine element within our personality, which is indeed implied in the Jewish conception of the creation of man. It is noticeable that S. John's idea of the appearance of the Word involves the conception of complete humanity. He does not say that the Word projected Himself into humanity, but that He *became* flesh (humanity). There is a definite change implied —a change, not a penetration. This points to a community of personality, a personality of a combined character, both Divine and human. S. John may have preferred not to lay stress on our Lord's human birth, because he wished to be regarded as dealing with the story of a combined personality. On both sides the Word sacrificed His personality, both in relation to God and in relation to man. He wept at the death of Lazarus, but He raised him from the dead. No one thinks that the flesh is in itself Divine, and yet He became flesh. Did He, in this act, impair His Divinity? The whole of S. John's Gospel answers No. The mysticism of the Gospel postulates an approach to the Word, of the possibility of which its symbolism is an assurance. He will draw all to Himself, if He is lifted out of the earth. His nature is a sign of His accessibility. "Come unto Me," says one of the Synoptists, "and I will give you rest." I am able to give you rest, because of what I am. You are able to get rest, when you recognize what I am. Now rest is not merely a corporeal state. A merely human capacity would not find rest in the Word. "Abide in Me, and I in you"—this is the goal

of more than human endeavour. And it is made possible by the higher value given by the Incarnation to human endeavour. The sons of God are not mere sons of men, just as the Son of God was no mere Son of man. But, if we take the two together, and acknowledge that they can be taken together, because they belong together, then we have a logical explanation of S. John's thesis, which is not contradicted by the Synoptists, namely that they express the mystery of the Word become flesh. For it is significant that we are not told that the Word was *made* flesh. It is a case of growth, not of manufacture—*became*. There can be no deterioration in an act of God. Alongside of the humility stands the generosity, the consideration. Deliberate humiliation is really exaltation. There is no more inherent impossibility in God's personality becoming a combined Divine and human personality than there is in the Word becoming flesh. Indeed it seems to be the only way in which He could become flesh. We are told by S. Paul that He emptied Himself, but that does not mean that Divinity was superseded by humanity. He did not give up equality with God because He refused to regard it as a prize. So then we must regard human actions or expressions of feeling as manifestations of the human side of His personality coloured by the Divine side, so that "Jesus wept" will express man's tears and God's pity.

To abide in Christ will mean, then, a participation of man in God. It will mean that our original likeness to God has been developed by the Incarnation. It will mean a general uplifting of our human nature. Just as the Atonement actually removes sin, so the Incarnation actually implants God. And so we are said by S. Paul to be incorporated with Christ in the likeness of His death and of His Resurrection. We are of the same growth with Him, as a shoot is grafted into a tree. But mysticism does not mean some mysterious process, but actual union.

It is not metaphorical, it is real. At the same time there is symbolism in our relation to Christ. We have the potentiality of becoming like Christ; what He is we may be. This is not a change of personality, it is an emphasizing of personality. And so it is more accurate to speak of illumination or inspiration than of conversion. The Word is not said to have been *changed* into flesh, but to have *become* flesh. He is not said to have become what we are, but to have taken up His abode in us. Immanence does not preclude transcendence. It is indeed emphasized by transcendence.

In S. John's Gospel the miracles of Christ are called 'signs.' They symbolize His power, but they manifest Himself. It will be allowed that all Nature is a manifestation of God. If we lift the veil of Nature, we see God. What the Word wished to demonstrate was that God is inherent in Nature. He shewed it by demonstrating that the wine is in the water, that sight is in the blind man's eyes, that strength is in the lame man's limbs, that life is in death. All this is summed up by the Incarnation: God is in man, man is in God. It is the solution of the riddle, the presentation of the mirrored object to the light. It is the elucidation of the story of the Creation in the story of the Creator. It is the presentation of the Creator to the creature in the Creation. We explain a parable as the presentation of material detail in a spiritual form, we may also so explain a miracle. In a miracle God is working with man in man. In a miracle man sees God. So in the world, if he opens his eyes—indeed they have been opened—man sees God. In life he sees God. The Incarnation is an enlarged study of life. In playing his part in life man contributes his personality, and to the elucidation of life God has contributed His personality.

Now this is not a one-sided contribution. The Jewish study of life was one-sided, because God was not completely within the Jew's perspective, and he

had a distorted view of God. He saw God indeed in Nature, but more in the disturbances of Nature than in its calm and measured course : in the lightning and the thunder more than in the regular order of the seasons ; in the storm more than in the peacefulness of calm. He saw God's anger more than His love. But in the signs of God displayed by Christ we see mercy and consideration. We see the vindication of right against wrong, of good against evil, but we see the intention of enlisting the subjects of the signs on the side of good. We see, in fact, we are admitted to the presence of God. That indeed is the essence of the Incarnation. But God's presence is assured to us not only in Nature, but in the very heart of Nature, which is human nature, human personality. It is not from two personalities that the appeal is made to us, but from a twofold personality. The appeal is made to our personality on both its sides, for we too are divine as well as human. Our likeness to God has been enlarged, and so our grasp of His presence is made more complete.

Love took up the harp of life and smote on all its chords with might,
Smote the chord of self, which trembling passed in music out of sight.

If the fear of God was the beginning of wisdom, the love of God became, in Christianity, the development of wisdom. Love is the foundation of the Incarnation. Love produced the Son of God, love produced the Word of God become flesh. Love produces the children of God, the fruits of the Incarnation. The Jewish religion was bound to be superseded, because it was not grounded, or at any rate conceived, completely in love. The Jews had too human a conception of God's personality, and they missed the combination now afforded us in the Incarnate Word. They studied God's acts rather than His character, and sometimes they misinterpreted them. Actions are an explanation of character, they show the lines on which the personality is laid. From

them is obtained an estimate of the personality, if they are not misunderstood.

It is fatal to regard God as like man, for that is to degrade the idea of God : we are to regard God as having become man, His Divinity being still preserved. Curiously enough the Jews resented this correction of their own conception. They considered the two parts of the conception as mutually destructive, as blasphemy in expression. He came into His own, and they that were His own received Him not. As long as God's transcendence is pressed too far, it will be impossible, and indeed offensive, to insist on His immanence. But the transcendent One, Who on that ground might hold aloof, may, of His own free-will, qualify His transcendence. In the Christian Church we see signs of objection to this qualification. We get the Docetic idea of an unreal humanity of Christ, and we get also a confusion between the Father and the Son. Nothing but the realization of a fundamentally Divine and human personality can save us from these misconceptions. The idea of propitiation presents the actual removal of the barrier between God and man. It bridges the gulf. But its strength lies in the Incarnation, not only in the Atonement. The Atonement begins in the Incarnation, relies on the Incarnation, stands or falls by the Incarnation. For that is the foundation of Christianity, and without it there is no understanding of the Crucifixion or the Resurrection or the Ascension. We have no consolation in the death of a mere man, we cannot assent to the death of God : we receive no assurance of immortality from the return of a Saviour to a merely human life, while we have no need of being assured that God lives : we gain no support from the information that God sits at God's right hand, apart from humanity. No, it is on the twofold nature of the personality that we found our reliance, as long as the sense of our own humanity bids us worship God from the human standpoint. Granted the needs of humanity, we have to base the satis-

faction of those needs on the double requirement of sympathy and power. Human sympathy, Divine power. But these, if held apart, seem bound to come into collision. United they stand, divided they fall. They are united in the Incarnate Word, Who became flesh to satisfy the needs of man, and remained God to satisfy man's aspirations.

CHAPTER III

HUMAN PERSONALITY

The Jewish contribution to the world's religion is the sovereignty of one God Who controls the whole world; the Hellenic contribution is the existence of the Absolute, from whom all creatures proceed, and towards whom they tend. But to the Jew the unit of religious obligation lay in the nation, and towards that the regard of God was essentially directed; whereas the Greek laboured to show the individual as self-sufficient. Now both these ideas meet in Christianity. When Jesus Christ preached repentance and the coming of the kingdom of heaven, He combined both views, communism and individualism. He appealed to each personality, commending Himself as the personal object of devotion, but He bequeathed His Spirit to the whole Church. We may say that this is the combination of duty to God and duty to our neighbour. Often and often He compares the kingdom of heaven to a man, and yet He insists on its comprehensiveness, as in the figures of a tree, a net, a feast. Religion makes both a personal and a collective appeal: a personal appeal, because it has to be accepted by the reason; a collective appeal, because of the liabilities that it involves. And this seems to involve a discrepancy, and to curtail the idea of personality. But the individual is so marked out by his presence among many individuals. Without the others, with whom he is in relation, he would cease to exist, or, at least, to be discriminated. Life is made up of relations, and they are equally real with the in-

dividual. He may think of himself apart, but he cannot think that thought without implying his distinction from others. Thus his very consciousness of existence depends upon his acknowledgment of other existences. He weighs himself against them, and they are the proof that he exists. Hence it is not strange that God should take account of mankind in the mass, that He should deal with them in the mass, that He should influence them in the mass. Nor is it inconsistent with this method that man should have his own individual responsibility. We talk of a consensus of opinion, but we do not imply by that a single mind belonging to a multitude. There is no consensus of opinion until each individual thinks for himself. Our Lord promised to inspire His Church with His Spirit, but He intended each personality to apply to himself the universal influence. Only so could the Spirit act, unless He acted in a mechanical way. We see the working of this method in the actual reproduction of human life. Human life is not continued otherwise than individually. The consent, or at any rate the combination, of two individuals must be secured, before a fresh individual can be produced, and the refusal of one will prevent the production. Similarly the possession of religion depends on individual choice. The opportunity may be presented to a society, but the law of free-will applies to each member of the society. But, when he has secured the possession, the individual recognizes his duty of sharing the possession. We talk of public spirit, that intangible tone which pervades a mass of persons, which induces them to think certain thoughts and practise certain actions in common. We say that they catch it from one another, but it would be more true to say that each catches it from one person. Personal influence is individuality expressing itself and eliciting a response in an individual. Suppose Christianity to be the religion of a society, it is through the individual choice of a single personality that

any one person accepts the religion. He may refuse it or accept it, he is free. We say in one of our prayers that the service of God is perfect freedom, or (more accurately) to serve God is to reign, and it is true that deliberate choice of God's service constitutes a sovereignty which is superior to any other, even the sovereignty of free-will. But that is because the act of choice constitutes also an act of surrender, the surrender of our free-will, which is made on absolutely voluntary grounds. But this surrender is an initial act, carrying vital consequences in its train. It is not isolated acts of obedience to separate rules, but a connected series of acts depending upon the original direction of the character on particular lines. Now this direction of the character has regard to two considerations, the subject itself and its object. God is the object, and a particular personality is the subject. Upon what I am depends my direction of my activities, and upon what God is depends my direction of them towards Him. Both considerations enter into my action.

We have to consider whether we are likely to be influenced by an abstract idea of God. God is Spirit, but that is no proof that we view Him as an abstraction. It is no reason why we should so view Him. Every real Christian contributes his personality to the question whether he is to believe in God or not. That is to say, he thinks and feels, and contributes his thought and feeling and will to the question. His thought and feeling and will form his personality. We cannot easily distinguish body and spirit in the parts that they play in this combined expression of personality. For continually we experience conflicts of all the three, and these are traced by S. Paul to the opposition between body and spirit. Now in considering the Incarnation we are met by the question of the personality of the Word become flesh. Because we acknowledge Him to be both God and man, does it follow that we ascribe to Him both a Divine personality and a

human personality? Surely we extend the idea of union to His personality and affirm that it contained both Divine and human elements. It was one, but two-sided. Our dealings with Christ are concerned with our own personality. To our union with Him our contribution is ourselves. But is there in Him a definite personality to which we are in relation? Again we refer to S. John's deliberate statement, "The Word *became* flesh." Here is no declaration of His becoming a particular man, and therefore we are not tied down to the idea of a human personality. That His personality should contain the human element is not equivalent to His possessing a specifically human personality. Rather it is claimed that His Divine personality absorbed the humanity, and that so the human character of the personality was subordinated to the Divine. But at least we see signs of human characteristics in the personality of Christ. We see human ignorance of facts that God would know, human failure to grasp the future that lies open to the sight of God. But this, we must remember, was deliberately chosen. It is part of Christ's emptying of Himself. It is to be set side by side with His assumption of equality with God, it is part of the subordination of His will to God. With One Who was eternal it might well be that on occasion His hour was not yet come.

The special relation of the Word to humanity will always be a decisive factor in our estimate of His personality. Our estimate is guided by the form in which our Lord cast His parables. He constantly likens the kingdom of heaven, not to some thing familiar to his hearers, but to a *man*. In other words He gives it a personal character. Can we do less in regard to Himself? The value of personal influence in the determination of character cannot be eliminated in the case of religion. The consideration of personality in regard to the Incarnation has an ethical as well as a metaphysical significance. If we cannot deal with human matters on any

other method, neither can we with Divine. Even when we are considering the relation of God to the Church, we must acknowledge the importance of a definite conception of God. For His influence on the Church depends partly on its capacity to realize Him and so to come in contact with Him. Critics have missed this requirement in their criticism of the defining tendency of the earlier Church. They have forgotten that it was a defensive, not an offensive, policy. Now, in determining the personality of Christ, we have still to guard against the opposite errors of distinction and confusion. Few people have a clear idea of their own personality, fewer still attempt to get a clear idea of the personality of Christ. The two defects may have much in common. Probably nearly everyone realizes that he is human, probably every Christian realizes that Christ is human and Divine. He may insist upon his own rights without a clear conception of his own individuality, but he may also obtain them better by consciously bringing his personality to bear upon them. He will certainly vindicate his religion best when he defines the object of his worship. If I know what I am, I am in a better position for expressing my relation to One Who describes Himself in the words, "I am." The Word Who became flesh could not have shut out His human nature from that definition. The contention is that He included it, but not in a distinctive way, nor yet in a confusing way. As the spirit in a well-balanced person dominates the body, so the Divine in Christ dominated the human. Dominated, but not superseded. "Not my will but Thine be done"—that is the keynote of His personality, as well as of His action. But the personality stands first, it guides the action. In every expression of our personality, we human beings are obstructed by the external obstacle of evil, the internal obstacle of selfness or sin. Christ experienced no such obstruction. He was humanly tested, but He did not humanly fail. He had always His

Divinity in reserve, and that never failed. It balanced His humanity, and so carried His humanity with it. It is difficult to realize the position, because it is unique. But there surely are times when we tend to realize it, because even here on earth we are in touch with heaven. Let us remember that our Lord is said to have claimed, even while He was on earth, to be at the same time in heaven. We may call it a reference to state rather than to place, but it is at the same time a reference to personality. Who is in heaven—'Who is' reminds us of 'I am.' It asserts eternal existence, which is claimed by God alone.

In our conception of God, and our relation to God, we rest upon this claim. We accept His limitation, and indeed it is both near and dear to us, but we rely upon the personality which is subject to the limitation and yet predominates over it. We believe that the Son of God is also the Son of man, but we should not appreciate the human sonship if we did not believe that the Divine sonship transcends both it and us. It is always to be remembered that Christ is not a deified man, but a humanized God. The grade is not upward from man, but downward from God. It is the Divine element that affects the human, and therefore in the resultant effect the Divine element prevails. So, unless we divide Christ's nature, we say that the outstanding characteristic of His personality is Divinity. Indeed that characteristic it is that has so profoundly modified humanity in general. The Divinity which emptied itself to fill humanity has raised all humanity to a higher level. There is no personality that has not gained something from this Divine condescension. But still what each personality has received it remains for it to accept and to develop. As S. John says, it is a case of substitution, grace for grace. The earlier influence is replaced and outdistanced by the later influence. The growth of the seed depends upon the soil, not only upon the goodness

of the seed. Our union with Christ depends upon His personality and upon ours. Something in us determines what He is to become in us. There is a twofold reciprocal relation—in Him, in us. He is of one substance with the Father, but He is also of one substance with us. The children of God cannot but feel that they are also children of men. But they feel that the God with Whom they desire union is also the Son of man. Metaphors fail as complete explanations of a mysterious relation, but they may help us to remember that Divinity colours humanity. Divinity gives its tone to humanity. In this light we must see the personality of Christ, and in this understanding we must devote ourselves to Him.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELATION OF THE INCARNATION TO THE ATONEMENT

The character of Christ determines His action—this is the thesis of S. John's Gospel. More exactly, the personality of Christ determines His action. The Incarnation is a state, the Atonement is an activity. The activity is regulated by the state. What He did is caused by what He was. It is not true to say that He came into the world to die. Rather He came into the world to live. Much more than through His death we are saved in His life. We may call death the instrument of His action, but we must consider life as the sphere of His action.

The keynote of the Atonement is love. For the efficacy of the Atonement lies in the Incarnation. S. Anselm has shewn how no other method lay at God's disposal. He has banished anger and vindictiveness from the sphere of the Atonement. He has not made light of sin, but He has made much of love. Love was the fulfilling of the law, and the principle applies to the supreme act of condescension. But this note the Atonement takes from the Incarnation. Therefore to explain the Atonement we must go back to the Incarnation.

It has already been shewn that the Incarnation recognizes both claims, God's claim and man's claim. God has a claim upon us, and we have a claim upon Him. His creation of the world is the natural outcome of His existence, it is not a Divine pastime. It may be said that we find ourselves in life not of our own will, but that does establish

a responsibility. There is responsibility on both sides, in Him Who makes, and in those who are made. In this we see part of our likeness to God, that we are both responsible.

Suppose that we take the point of view that the Atonement is a reconstruction. That reconstruction is based upon the Incarnation. The relaying of the foundations opens up the renewal of the building. Man is drawn near to God much more by a fact than by an act. The mysticism of the Incarnation paves the way for the Atonement. It initiates us into the Divine mysteries, and constitutes the principle of which the Atonement is a manifestation. The Greek mysteries emphasized immortality, the Christian mysteries emphasize life. Immortality depends on a true conception of life. The Incarnation deals with life. It deals with life from the foundations, gathering together the two lines of life. It is not possible to explain life on any other principle than that it comes from God. The Incarnation emphasizes this explanation. Only the author of life could change the application of the principle of life and direct it into a new channel. Only the author of life would realize the need of a new channel. With Him were the knowledge and the power. Now, if Atonement means reconciliation, it is clear that the process will be more fundamental, if the two sides are brought closer together by actual approximation rather than by mere agreement. It is not what they agree upon that counts so much as what they are by personal relation. Their personal relation is more important than their mutual accommodation. We call the story of this approximation the new agreement between God and man, and it is a story of life and relation rather than of dealings and terms. The conditions are laid down in terms of life. S. John in his Gospel does not specify the terms, he rather assumes them in stating them. He sets forth principle rather than detail. The account of the Virgin birth he replaces by the state-

ment that the Word became flesh. His Gospel is the corroboration of the statement, and he does not definitely explain the character of the Word or the process of the becoming. And yet we get from him a conception of Christ's nature and a picture of what He became. If we turn to his Epistles, we are met by the declaration that God is Love. This elucidation throws a clear light upon the Incarnation. It takes us back to the nature of God, and accounts for His appearance in the world. It gives us the ground of our attitude to Him. It explains His relation to us and our relation to Him. By love we account for the existence of the Son of God, and by love we account for His influence on us.

There are two opposite environments described in S. John's Gospel, God and the world. They are not necessarily antagonistic, but they are represented by him as being in antagonism. The natural affinity between them is expressed by the statement that He came into His own : the unnatural opposition between them is expressed in the statement that they who were His own received Him not. The possibility of maintaining the affinity is expressed by the reference to those who did receive Him, and the effectuation of the affinity is noted in the phrase 'children of God.' But the whole tenor of this Gospel seems to labour to shew that through human wilfulness there was a deliberate determination to accentuate the antagonistic character of the human environment. This had been foreshadowed by the whole history of the Jewish nation. It boasted of being a chosen nation, and indeed its boast was well founded, and founded not so much upon responsiveness of character as upon historical fact. Its selection was actual more than ethical, and the ethics of the position failed to justify the actuality. For the nation did not rise to the position. It is easy to point to the weakness of human nature as an explanation, but we detect in the Jews a strain of obstinacy, which is nothing else but opposition to

God. That strain appears in the relation of the main body of the Jews to our Lord, and leads Him to characterize them as children of Satan. Thus they stand in opposition to the children of God as darkness to light. They belong to the other environment, the environment of hate as opposed to the environment of love.

Now, had God considered merely this environment, the Incarnation would not have taken place at all. But He did not consider it, He considered potentiality. The Word became flesh, in view of what might be, in view of the possible, the ideal human sonship of God. His real Sonship effectuated the general possible sonship. It altered the status of the humanity that He assumed. The change of status establishes the possibility of a change of attitude. Religion is a matter of status, otherwise the attitude will not matter, but it involves the condition of attitude. Our attitude depends partly upon our free-will, partly upon our change of status. Similarly the Atonement involves a change of status and a change of attitude. But the Atonement is also a relation to environment. It lifts us out of the environment of evil, and it is also calculated to determine our attitude towards that environment. By the Incarnation God has placed Himself within our human environment. This is an interpenetration of the good environment within the evil environment. It is a propitiation, a bridging of the gulf between God and man. The propitiation takes place initially in the Incarnation; it is not confined to the Atonement, as so much incorrect explanation labours to prove. It is quite true that a victorious demonstration of the power of life naturally includes superiority over death, and that that superiority can only be proved through death—that is, by actual experience. But the predominant factor is life, which asserts itself against death. Hence the Resurrection. In his consideration of this, S. Paul is really asserting the Incarnation, when he argues from

Christ's Resurrection to ours. For he is arguing on the assumption of our likeness to Christ, which depends on the Incarnation. If due credit is given to the value of life in considering the Atonement, we are irresistibly brought back to the Incarnation, the true explanation of life. Fact takes precedence of act.

It is interesting to notice that S. John regards the Crucifixion as a glorification of Christ. "And I, if I be lifted up out of the earth, will draw all men to Myself." He explains this by saying, "This He said, signifying by what death He was going to die." Even if exaltation really refers to Christ's Ascension, S. John makes it refer to the Crucifixion. He, in his Incarnation treatise, gives us no theory of the Atonement. He includes it in the idea of the Incarnation, as participating in the glory of the original conception. We are told that those who come to Christ come by the drawing of the Father, and we are also told that the judging of the world is placed in human hands. Men judge themselves by their own acts. What does this imply but a mutual relation between man and God? But this mutual relation is surely initiated by God's assumption of human nature. It is an ideal relation, ideal before it begins to be practical. It is ideal in the Platonic sense, in so far as the Incarnation is symbolic of life. Not that we are to regard the Incarnation as a mere picture of life, but rather as an interpretation of life, justified by the impetus that it has given to life. Life has been made more glorious, both in its actuality and in its potentiality. If a fact can be represented as a drama, then we may say that we are called upon to play our part. But our capacity for playing it has been increased. This is implied in the statement that the Word tabernacled in us. For that gives the Incarnation a personal application, and extends it beyond the notion of an abstract humanity. It extends it to human personality, and postulates Divine person-

ality, in us—those whom the author claims as associated with him. This implies human solidarity, and it implies his acceptance of God's appeal, and theirs. But that solidarity is created, or at least strengthened, by the fact of the Incarnation. The influence of the Holy Spirit takes effect in the Church at large, and the influence of the Incarnation touches the whole of humanity. Humanity feels within itself the touch of God's hand. Even those who do not respond to the touch are at least more capable of response. Sometimes in His miracles our Lord healed sufferers by touching them. But on occasion the touch came from the sufferer. Or the personal touch might be replaced by an effort of faith. In either case a relation was established between man and God. The Incarnation has established a relation between God and man, and some effort is needed to give effect to the relation. The Atonement extends the relation to the environment created by sin. It sets us free from that environment, not by anger, but by love. It proceeds upon the original lines. "When Thou wast about to take man upon Thee to deliver" is the expression of the Te Deum in the correct translation, referring to the Incarnation. Deliverance was assured by the assumption of humanity. "When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers" is the reference to the Atonement. The result of deliverance is secured by the conquest of sin. It is the Incarnation, then, which originates deliverance from sin. It is the Atonement which consummates the deliverance.

We see then in the Atonement a further stage of the development of God's plan. We do not see it as an isolated act, but as a component part of an essential fact. It is not a declaration of God's nature so much as a manifestation of a characteristic of that nature. It is a phase rather than a principle. But the Incarnation raises the whole question of God's relation to man and man's relation to God.

By it we stand or fall in religion. In any religion much depends on the knowledge of God, and this is essentially the case in the Christian religion, for by its very name it involves a definition of Christ. Then again it is so very personal, and depends peculiarly upon the relation of its followers to their Master. They are brought into so much closer touch with Him than the followers of other religions. Their relation, depending so much upon what He is, necessitates a knowledge of His nature that will be in proportion to the value of His personality for them. A religion of love can never exaggerate the quality of love in the object of its worship. They trace their love to Him, and therefore it concerns them nearly to investigate the nature of His love. That is tantamount to investigating Himself. Now, whereas the Atonement is a manifestation of love, there has been a tendency to lay too much stress on its legal character, or even to manufacture a legal character for it. God did not effect a legal transaction, for that would have invalidated the voluntariness of Christ's offering. In place of the idea of a court of law we must retain the idea of a home of love. In doing so we do justice to the conception of the relation between the Father and the Son, which is love. We extend it to the relation between God and man. We see an offering rather than a penalty, and we keep apart from God's character the vindictiveness which is absolutely alien to Him. We see the same devotion which characterized the Incarnation displayed in the Atonement. We avoid applying a Jewish character to the religion which, if it was intended to complete the Jewish religion, was certainly not intended to obscure its own fundamental characteristic. The union of God with humanity is bound to appear in an act which relieved humanity of the special obstacle that separated it from God. The special characteristic of which God emptied Himself (in S. Paul's phrase) was equality with God. He did this to put Himself more upon

a level with humanity. He wished to regard humanity from the human standpoint. The legal explanation of the Atonement emphasizes a supposed Divine standpoint. But it takes a view that runs counter to the essential qualities of God. It removes sympathy and mercy and equity from the question, and separates equity from justice. Whereas, on the other hand, if we maintain the original basis of the Incarnation, we retain sympathy and mercy and equity, and at the same time satisfy justice. We satisfy justice by recognizing suffering as a necessary condition of life. But we do not isolate suffering in our emphasis. Redemption becomes deliverance, but there is no idea of paying a price to the spirit of evil, for that would be acknowledging his authority in a realm where he is only a usurper. It would also controvert our Lord's express statement, " I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven." It would substitute for His promise to those who come to Him " I will give you justice," or even " I will exact a just punishment from you."

The Incarnation is a reconstruction of humanity, and every Divine effort on behalf of humanity contributes to the reconstruction. All God's efforts rest upon the same foundation, and none of them upset it; they all strengthen it, if it can be said to need strengthening. The foundation is Jesus Christ, and He is the Word become flesh. His abiding in us gives us the power and the privilege of abiding in Him, and our abiding in Him induces His abiding in us. The process is reciprocal, as the fact of the Incarnation suggests. For that fact involves our mystical union with Christ, and a mystical union precludes all reluctance on either side.

CHAPTER V

THE KENOSIS

The Kenosis or emptying is a term applied by S. Paul to the self-renunciation of God exhibited in the Incarnation. He does not actually use the noun, but he uses the corresponding verb, "He emptied Himself," just as S. John in his Gospel does not use the word 'faith,' but constantly uses the word 'believe.' What S. Paul says is that Christ did not regard equality with God as a prize which must be retained at all costs, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. This implies that we are to see in the Incarnation a voluntary depression of Divinity, involved in the assumption of humanity. He also speaks of Christ as being in the form of God. The word that he uses for 'being' (*ὑπάρχων*) is very expressive, for it goes down to the very essence of the nature, showing what Christ actually was in Himself. Now it is argued from this that S. Paul is referring to the state of Christ before His Incarnation, to the Divine nature which He had before He entered on His earthly life. For it is urged that to speak of Him as existing in the form of God is to distinguish that from His taking the form of a slave, and that the first reference is to His previous state, and the second reference to the human form which He assumed. But there is another explanation proposed, which is that *ὑπάρχων* applies to both states, the previous and the earthly. This is said to be borne out by the fact that 'being' is in the present tense, whereas 'taking' is in the past (aorist) tense, and so 'being' implies a continuous state,

while 'taking' refers to a definite point of time. Christ retained the nature of God, expressed in form, all through His earthly existence. But He did not insist on His right to be on an equality with God, He satisfied His equality of conditions, and so far emptied Himself. For He took the nature of man, man's subject nature, and appeared in the likeness of men and took the outward appearance of man and so humiliated Himself. This voluntary subjection or obedience was carried to its extreme limit, death, even the humiliating death of crucifixion. The result was exaltation above His former position, in so far as He then added the glory of Redeemer or Saviour, which He had not had before. (Gifford, *The Incarnation*.)

The bearing of this passage (Phil. ii. 5–11) on the Incarnation is important, because it brings out the predominance of Divinity over humanity in the Incarnate Word. It shews how the Divine nature persisted all through our Lord's human life and maintains the presence of both Divinity and humanity in Christ's personality. The self-emptying involves no more than the deliberate obscuring of Divine glory for that earthly period, the Divine nature being retained all through, though not expressed in all its manifestations. It also alludes to the likeness of men which He bore, not tying Him down to the likeness of a special man, and thus suggests His influence on humanity at large. It does away with the idea of any eclipse of Divinity in the Word become flesh.

Our union with Christ is, then, a union with a really Divine personality and His immanence is an immanence of God in us. We have not lost but gained by the Incarnation. And we have also an incentive to our voluntary surrender of ourselves in answer to God's appeal. For S. Paul represents the idea of self-sacrifice on the part of Christ as dominating His Incarnation. He emptied *Himself*, He humiliated *Himself*. There is no compulsion on

God's side, no cessation of the love existing between the Father and the Son. And so we are taught the predominance of love amongst the Christian virtues. Religion is a matter of love rather than of duty. It is attachment to a Person, not a mere observance of rules. That indeed is the lesson of the Incarnation. That God should remain God, while He feels and thinks and acts as man, is really a more complete sacrifice than the temporary suspension of Divinity for the temporary assumption of humanity would have been. For it involves an apparent persistence of conflict throughout His earthly life. But, as it is, both Divinity and humanity persist. Divinity pervades His earthly life, and, when it is finished, the character of Redeemer and Saviour is transferred to the higher sphere as an additional glory.

Note the paradox of the Incarnation. The humanity of Christ does not detract from His Divinity. It appears in His personality, unseparated from His Divinity, ennobled by His Divinity. It is our link with Him, but the chain is fastened in heaven. The chain is not broken by the descent from heaven. Thus the descent is aptly described as an ascent, the Christ on earth is still God in heaven. We cannot clearly distinguish the human personality from the Divine, we can only say that in the personality of the Word become flesh the Divine predominates over the human. And yet He emptied Himself. He was equal with God, He remained equal with God, but He did not assert His equality in all its conditions. That would have been excessive assertion in One who had deliberately assumed humanity. It would have contradicted the love which lay at the root of the Incarnation. It would have interfered with the propitiation which was its object, indeed it would have maimed His life and precluded His death. But its renunciation was voluntary, and thus serves as a model for all renunciations. How often human self-denial is vitiated by the consideration whether we are obliged to offer the sacrifice. We are not

obliged, except that honour and love and faith constitute an obligation. We are not obliged, except that we profess to be worshippers and followers of the Incarnate Word.

The self-emptying of Christ thus serves as an example to us, who share His humanity, but the process is comprehensive as well as attractive. It cleared the ground for the action of His Divinity, by letting in the action of humanity. Its comprehensiveness is the measure of its effectiveness. While union with Christ is the aim of our religion, the principle of that union has already been established. He is the foundation on which we build. It is not possible to lay another foundation, because any other would be human, and this is Divine. For He retained His equality with God, and that gave the virtue to His renunciation. Religion is the acceptance of an established fact. The fact is the reconstruction of human nature. No one would wish to minimize the force of the example, but it is the reconstruction that enables the imitation. That is the foundation of the building. The grace of God is not an influence which merely lies open to those who are willing to receive it. It is already given, it is inherent in human nature. But it is not always discovered and recognized. It is an internal character, and its internal efficacy is not vitiated by the possibility of external renewal. No study of human nature is complete which regards humanity as simply open to God's influence through the power of the Incarnation. Humanity is already penetrated by the power of the Incarnation. What it may become depends on what it has been made. The Word became flesh and so tabernacled in us, in our humanity. God has come into His own domain, and He is there, waiting for those who are His own to receive Him, to recognize His presence. They may deny the fact, but they cannot destroy the fact. In practice, as in theory, religion is the acknowledgment of a fact. " I came that they may have life, and that

they may have it abundantly." It is the abundance that counts. That is its superiority as a matter of life. There is now a rich store of life in human nature. There is its elevation to Divinity, its penetration by Divinity. There is the preparation of the ground for the reception of the seed, there is the sowing of the seed. It might be said that, if God breathed into man the breath of life at the creation, He breathed into humanity a new breath of life at the redemption. He almost identifies Himself with the Holy Spirit in naming Him to His disciples, and so we may say that, when He came, He came with spiritual renewal. It might be unfair to press the metaphor, and yet it is tempting to suggest that His self-emptying implies a filling of those who were to profit by it.

This, then, is the right that we have to become children of God. It is right, not merely opportunity. It is a qualification, not a mere offer of improvement. It is a higher grace in place of a lower grace. The disciples of Christ are not those who have suddenly learned a new fact, but those who are passing through a continual process of learning. Their learning has to be directed on themselves as well as on Him from Whom they learn. They have to realize the character of the nature with which they are dealing. But they have to recognize the position in which they themselves stand and the nature of the character which they have to develop. It is not merely as human beings that they must regard themselves or merely as a human character that they must treat it. We Christians have a better starting-point than our predecessors. We start as followers not merely of God but of an incarnate God. We start as having already received a portion of the life-principle of the Incarnation. S. Paul describes Christ as a pledge (of our life from death), *ἀπαρχή*, which implies our share in His life. The Incarnation does not influence the Christian Church as a mere historical fact, on which it leans as a support, but it influences the individual Christian as a factor in his very nature. S. Paul

assigns to Christ the fulness of Divine qualities, and we may consider the fulness, of which He emptied Himself only in regard to certain Divine manifestations of glory, as contributing to the completion of the Christian character in the initial stage of each growth. The Incarnation has not done everything automatically, but it has supplied an organic nidus of character and nature. It has inoculated human nature with Divine power, by the penetration of humanity with Christ's Divinity. We *are* better, not merely we may become better. It is the Christian organic reconstruction.

For this Christ emptied Himself of glory. He thought this end worthy of the sacrifice of His equality with God. His Divine nature remained unimpaired, but it was obscured, for His human life and for the sake of humanity, in certain of its manifestations. In the result He obtained greater glory than before, for He added to His character the glory of human redemption and salvation.

This action did not merely proceed from personality, but it reacted on personality. It might be called a miracle in the Divine sphere. It was a manifestation of Divine power and love. It was a deliberate self-limitation, without being a surrender of power. It lay within the Divine omnipotence. It presented God in a new character, but it did not compromise His character. Rather it impressed His character more visibly upon man. If a human being limits himself, he may do it to concentrate his powers, with the deliberate intention of obtaining a more effective result. He is able to produce more effective action, which is equivalent to more activity, not less activity. The purpose of the Incarnation is the good of the human race. That good is effected by closer contact with the human race. The contact is one of personality. The personality of God assumes humanity—not a human personality, but humanity. God did not choose a man for His dwelling, but His assumption of humanity resulted in a Being of

Divine and human nature. If we describe His personality as human, we miss the exact method of His contact with humanity, we limit His contact. But that a human element was included in His personality we are bound to allow. Only it is a general, not a specific element. The prevailing characteristic of the personality of the incarnate Word was Divine. The inclusion of humanity involved the suppression of certain Divine manifestations, and yet He remained essentially equal to God. He was in the form of God all through, but, though He could not but retain God's essence, He took the outward form of man. The difference between essential form and outward form is the measure of the balance maintained between the Divine and human elements of the Incarnate personality. At the same time He took the essential form of a servant. His humanity was not merely external. But it was subject. What He willed as man He presented at the bar of God for sanction. He devoted His human will to His Divine will. So far His personality had a human character. But, if a spiritually minded person acts in material matters through his physical powers, we do not deny that his spiritual nature predominates even in these. If Christ showed human feeling in His dealings with men, that does not argue that so far His humanity predominated. For we do not know how far Divine love can be estimated in human terms. We only know that man was made in the likeness of God. Perhaps we might say that He always estimated facts by the standard of Divine value. Ethics depends upon values, and there is no reason why the management of a Divine personality should not proceed in a similar way. If so, then we can understand how His personality was more Divine than human. It must have been so, if He still remained in the form and essence of God.

Suppose for the moment that the Divine and human elements balanced one another. That is impossible in view of the immense superiority of God over man.

It is impossible to balance two absolutely unequal powers. We cannot even understand how a great deal of humanity combined with a small amount of Divinity could be otherwise than controlled by the Divinity. We have at the same time to reckon with the declaration of ignorance on certain points made by our Lord. So far humanity prevailed. But we do not know whether this was not part of the Divine self-emptying. If He grew in wisdom, then there were deficiencies in His knowledge. But it is supposable that God chose not to know as man, although as God He did know. That might be one direction of the self-limitation, one manifestation of Divinity which He chose to suppress. To speak of a balance of the two elements is to imply that a certain amount of humanity is equal to a certain amount of Divinity, whereas there is no relativity of value between them.

Nor can we suppose that sometimes humanity prevailed, and sometimes Divinity. For that would imply a separation of the two natures, which is clearly precluded by S. John's statement that the Word became flesh. He does not say that He assumed flesh and added it to His Divinity. If He took the form of a servant, and if form implies qualities that belong to the essential nature, then the resulting personality must include qualities derived from each source, Divinity and humanity. His personality was coloured by humanity and so far His Divinity was obscured. Consciously obscured, but not intrinsically impaired. An essence cannot part with any of its essential qualities and then recover them. It can refuse to apply them, for its own purposes. It is impossible to conceive a suffering God, but it is not impossible to conceive that God should condescend to suffer, as part of His acceptance of humanity. The Incarnation is an example of God's omnipotence. He only could set on foot such an enterprise. But He can do nothing self-contradictory. What He does is in accordance with His nature, and to assume

humanity is not to adopt a human personality. So that we are forced to suppose a Divine personality, without refusing to it human characteristics. These were in harmony with its higher law, so that the human will was under the control of the Divine will. Christ cannot be said to have been without a human will because He allowed it to be directed by His Divine will. His personality must be considered Divine, if it expressed itself in the Divine direction. We can never enter into the heart even of a human personality other than our own. We can only estimate it by the manifestations that it gives. These are the signs by which we must judge the personality of Christ Himself. He clearly shewed of what nature that was. When He says, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest," it is God Who speaks, for He only can offer rest and claim the right of fulfilling the offer. When He says, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven," it is God Who speaks, for He only can pronounce the doom of evil. When He heals the lame, or drives out the evil spirit, or restores the dead to life, it is God Who works, for only He has power like this. When He explains life by this parable or that, it is God Who gives the explanation, because only He understands the inner meaning of life. It has been said of Christ that He was either God or not good (*Christus, si non Deus, non bonus*), and this summarizes the dilemma of His personality.

There are many indications that the standard of Christ's humanity was the very highest, but they have behind them the Divine impulse. He commends Himself to us by His all-embracing sympathy, but it is drawn from a more than human source. The deepest sympathy is the sympathy of God, and it is this that colours the best of lives and the most self-sacrificing of deaths. Clothed indeed in human form, for the express purpose of touching the heart of man, it is of the Divine essence. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his

life for his friends,"—here we stand in presence of Divine love. When we remember that He said, not 'life,' but 'soul' (personality), then we recognize that that personality was Divine, and, whatever human contribution was given to it, we contend that in it Divinity prevailed.

Some light is thrown upon the difficult question of our Lord's personality by His own expression "Now is My soul troubled," which He uses in connexion with the visit of the Greeks who desired to see Him. This visit opens up the great question of Jewish responsibility, and the disturbance created in the soul of Christ arises from the consideration of the Jewish position now assailed by the claims of outsiders. He has just been saying that he who hateth his soul in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. The sacrifice of any human being is centred in his personality, and the sacrifice which is laid upon Christ touches His personality. The question of sacrifice arises when two of the great divisions of the human race come in conflict, when the question is raised whether the relation of God to man is to be special or general. The question touches the inner personality of Christ and disturbs it, and He asks, "What am I to say?" He also prays that God will save Him out of this hour. He prays to Him as Father. He is conscious of His Divine Sonship. In His Divine Sonship He feels the disturbance, the upheaval, and in His Divine Sonship He prays for deliverance. The human element is asserting itself against the sacrifice. But He recognizes that the conflict touches the crucial question of His relation to humanity, and He asks that it may be overruled to the glory of God: "Father, glorify Thy name." It is a question of Divine glory. The Divinity within Him asserts itself above the humanity, the Divinity prevails. Does not this argue for the actual predominance of Divinity in His personality? and is not this incident a clue to the understanding of the nature of that personality?

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the Son is called the effulgence of God's glory and the expression of God's essence. He shews the light of the glory and He bears the marks of the essence. Looking at Him, we see the glory and we trace the essence. But what we see and trace is fundamental, for the brightness comes from within and the expression represents internal character. We claim for the personality of Christ this brightness and this character. In His human acts we see more than humanity. Humanity is in action when His personality is disturbed, but the disturbance is quelled by the Divine essence.

In the struggle which S. Paul describes as carried on within a human personality, the two warring elements are spirit and flesh. The spirit prevails, but the personality thus apparently divided is called 'I.' In the struggle which S. John describes as carried on within the personality of Christ, the two warring elements are God and man. God prevails; God Who is in Christ prevails over man who is in Christ. S. Paul in another passage contrasts Christ with ordinary men by calling Him spiritual and them soulish (A.V. and R.V. 'natural'). He regards Adam as the typical man, summing up in himself all human characteristics, the representative of the human race as it was: he regards Christ as the representative of the reconstructed human race. He calls Adam soulish and Christ spiritual. The expression 'soulish' (ψυχικός) is difficult, and its difficulty is emphasized by the translation 'natural.' Probably it means that the lower side of human nature is ordinarily pressed forward to excess, the personality receiving a one-sided development. But in Christ the higher side is not unnaturally pressed forward, and the spiritual takes a reasonable predominance. Earth is contrasted with heaven: man cannot easily shake himself free from his earthly origin and environment, Christ easily asserts His heavenly origin and environment. Whenever it was a question what He was in

Himself, the heavenly, whatever the struggle might be, always asserted itself.

We are hardly called upon to define the exact position held by the spirit in Christ's personality. The important point for us is that, whereas the spirit ought to prevail in us, in Him God prevailed. The Evangelists rarely mention His spirit. But, when we say that humanity was in Him in strict obedience to Divinity, we are including His spirit in His humanity. What is the higher side of personality in us was in Him part of His humanity, but in close touch with Divinity. Our struggle leaves us constantly defeated, His struggle left Him constantly victorious. Which is as much as to say that our humanity fails us, whereas He was always obedient to His Divinity. According to the Athanasian Creed we find in Christ the Divine and the human, whereas we find in man the spirit and the flesh. Only the Creed inaccurately calls the spirit 'soul.' But the terms are not correlative. We cannot call Christ's Divinity spirit and His humanity flesh. On the other hand, in dividing His humanity into spirit and body, as we do ours, we have to remember the close relation in Him of humanity to Divinity—in fact, the unique relation. Divinity predominated over humanity in His personality.

The various heresies in the early Christian Church exalt His humanity, and depress His Divinity, too much. They insist too much on the parallel between Christ and ordinary men. There is no parallel. We do not know what the nature of Christ is, because it is unique : there is nothing with which we can compare it. We have only one case to argue from. But we can consider all the phenomena of the one case. We can compare the more human with the more Divine manifestations of His nature. The mistake is in over-emphasizing " Ecce Homo," instead of maintaining " Ecce Deus." In the one case the Divine characteristics are minimized ; in the other case the Divine characteristics are seen to express

the human. In the one case something is concealed, in the other something is symbolized. S. John is a good example of the latter class. We must acknowledge that the author of the Fourth Gospel never depreciates the humanity of his great subject while he is exalting His Divinity. He could not do so, when his subject was the Word become flesh. Flesh is a concrete term, and perhaps S. John's mysticism is all the more convincing from his bold statement of his thesis. Those who explain 'Word' by 'Wisdom' cannot explain away 'flesh.' Some may trace 'Word' to Judaic influence, and some to Philonic influence, but at least 'flesh' implies humanity.

Those who study the Incarnation as a fact are more likely to arrive at its value as an influence. They regard its internal influence more than its external influence. They consider what it has done to humanity rather than what it has done for humanity. That is its mystic force. It draws all men to itself by its reshaping of their humanity. It presents Christ, not as a man, but as man. His personality is original, from the beginning, and it has never lost its original character. For the acts of God are timeless, eternal. The life that He expressed is timeless, eternal. The Word is timeless, eternal. But humanity is conditioned by time. How then can the two be combined? If they are combined, the timeless must predominate over the temporal. And it does predominate. It predominates in personality, as in essence. Whenever the personality of Christ acts at a given moment, there is always the timeless essence behind it. At a given moment He may be troubled by a consideration that is in time, just as He is limited in His human activity by the conditions of space, but in Himself His consideration is ruled by His Divinity. A man would have looked to his manhood, but Christ looks to His Father, and His oneness with the Father prevails. The subordination in Him of the human to the Divine ensured that His humanity would not prevail against His Divinity.

CHAPTER VI

MANIFESTATIONS OF DIVINITY

In S. John's Gospel we have a new presentation of Christ to His Church. Without regarding it as upsetting the Synoptic presentation, we are bound to regard it as an advance upon that presentation. Its main thesis is life, its object is to shew how life is conferred on those who accept Him. But life is also described as light, it is a revelation. Christ is inherent in those who receive Him, He is also visible to them. They live in Him, they see Him. All through the Gospel the aim is to shew what He is. In the Synoptic Gospels this is done by means of descriptions of His words and acts, in S. John the words predominate. But the words deal more directly with Himself. So the manifestation of His Divinity is made to depend more upon intuition. Signs are given of His Divinity, but there is a caution against excessive reliance upon signs. His followers are to believe in Him by feeling rather than by sight. It is true that miracles are signs of His power, but belief may be induced by other means than the excitement of wonder. Miracles are a revelation of God, but so also are the Scriptures, and yet Christ puts direct approach to Himself above the reliance upon these for eternal life. Light and life are of immediate force, and darkness serves to throw light into relief rather than to overwhelm it, and death is powerless against life.

In the prologue of S. John's Gospel we are told (according to the old punctuation), " that which has

been made was life in Him," which has also been translated " that which has been made –in that was life." The human race has in the Word its source of life—eternal life ; and that life, appearing in the human race, was to it the light of salvation. Thus Jesus Christ lives in humanity, which He also enlightens.

The point which arises is the communication of the life, the revealing of the light. What S. John has to shew is the relation of the Word to God, and the relation of the Word to man. The life of God was the subject of the Old Testament, and that involved the life of man as related to God. But the life of God is extended in the New Testament, and so the relation of man to God receives an extension too. The extension of the life of God is the Incarnation of the Word, and the extension of man's relation to God depends upon the action of the Word and the acceptance of His action. Jesus explains God, and, when God is thus known, God explains Jesus. Jesus is the Son of God, but He is also the Word of God. If we know Him as the Son of God, we extend our knowledge of the Father, and our extended knowledge of the Father leads us to understand how the Word expresses the Father. Thus the relation between the Father and the Son is an efficient factor in religion. What is seen to be possible is seen to be actual. Neither the Father nor the Son could exist apart from one another : the Father's existence postulates the existence of the Son, and the Son's existence postulates the existence of the Father. The existence of each involves the existence of the other. Now S. John has studied Jesus Christ from life, he has learned to know Him. From knowing Him, he learns to know God. Practical experience has produced knowledge which is beyond experience. This is intuition. It does not depend on miracles, though they support it : it is direct and effective, even apart from their support. He states this clearly in his first Epistle : " That which we saw and our hands handled

. . . that which we have seen and heard proclaim we also unto you." In his Gospel he says, "We saw His glory." He admitted the evidence of his own feeling, and then, applying the evidence to God, he supplemented his knowledge of Jesus by continuing it. By Jesus he learned to know God, and then again by God he learned to know Jesus. Thus the two sides of his knowledge interact.

The life thus revealed to S. John is not merely a historical life. The light which shone upon him is no reflected light. It has even been objected against his Gospel that it is not historical but ideal. If that means that he has grasped the principle of the life without relying on the details, then there is no reasonableness in the objection. Any real conception of Christ must be ideal, because He is above human experience. The human details can only outline the principle. The question is whether his personality was brought into touch with Christ's personality, so that he was able to present Christ's personality to his readers. Are the manifestations, which they are made to see, manifestations of a convincing personality? S. John shows that the Father cannot exist without the Son, and that the Son derives His existence from the Father. He begins with Godhead, and he proceeds to the revelation of the Word in the flesh. This revelation is continued throughout Christ's human life. The words that He says and the acts that He does either support or refute the conception. The readers of the Gospel must decide whether the life of Christ here presented does support the thesis. But the Word is Himself life and light. If so, there is something that lays hold of them and enlists their love and their belief. They are not merely critics of a thesis, but they are recipients of a life.

But there is another question, whether what they read runs counter to their previous conception of Jesus Christ. Is this the Jesus of the Synoptists, or is it another Jesus? The Gospel is addressed to Christians, it is intended to describe One Whom they

already know. It may either confirm or upset their Christian belief.

It is written from the Divine point of view, whereas the Synoptic point of view is human. Heaven is opened, and the angels of God ascend and descend upon the Son of man. It is symbolic, in the sense that there is an inner meaning within the words and acts that witness to the Son of God. Some have regarded S. John as a dramatist, who gives play to his imagination in the descriptions that he paints and the character that he depicts. But he is rather a prophet, who sees the signs of his time and interprets them to a later age. He claimed to have described these signs, that his readers might have life in the name of Jesus. If Jesus represented the craving of the age and the satisfying of that craving, the accuracy of the Evangelist cannot be called in question. It has been maintained that the discourses of Jesus in S. John's Gospel are, like the speeches in Thucydides, coloured by the Apostle's own thought. This need not impeach his accuracy of idea, even if it denies accuracy of verbal presentation. The method of exact reproduction was not prevalent in his day, and we have no right to judge his method by ours. It is fair to allow the presence of symbolism in the discourses as well as in the miracles, which he expressly calls signs.

We notice the full manifestation of Christ from the beginning. The Word was in the beginning, and what the Word became when He became flesh He fully became in the beginning of His earthly life. There is no development as time goes on. There is the original devotion of the human will, but there is the original consciousness of the Divine will controlling that devotion. It is the idea always present, it is the symbol of God's kingship of man, it is the mystic assurance of man's union with God. Thus the nature of Christ is presented to His followers from the first. They have not to correct their conception of Him, as they advance in intimacy with

Him, except so far as their added experience strengthens the conception.

The personal manifestation takes the place of the Synoptic kingdom of heaven. The disciples have life as their present and future substitute for that kingdom, eternal life, which begins now and is not relegated to the future. It is not called eternal because of its lasting nature, but because of its spiritual character. The name refers to quality, not to time. As the King of the kingdom is Christ Himself, so Christ Himself is life. To know Him is life, life is union with Him, and union with Him is essentially knowledge.

We have a series of metaphors which bring out this personal relation. We have Life and Light, we have also the Way, the Truth, the Door, the Vine. And, in our need of guidance, we have the Good Shepherd. Each of these has its own speciality of manifestation. Death and darkness belong to the side of evil : life and light belong to the side of good. There is an antagonism between good and evil which appears in the general attitude of man to God : this is expressed by the term ' world.' The world does not wish to live, it does not wish to see. But it cannot crush out life, it did not do that even by the crucifixion, which is really a glorification of the supposed victim. It cannot obscure light, it certainly cannot overwhelm it. There is a Way which lies open to those who really desire access to God, there is a Truth which is clear to those who desire reality, there is a Door which will open to the insistent, there is a Vine in which all who belong to God find organic growth. They combine variety of experience with unity of relation, they are manifestations of the Word to men. To walk, to believe, to apply, to grow, are characteristics of those who live and see. But all these efforts are brought under one control, there is the Good Shepherd.

There is a danger that religion will become academic. Its practical character is assured by its personal

relation. There is no theory of religion in S. John's Gospel. The Incarnation is not a theory, because the Word *became* flesh. That was very practical, for it brought God into the arena of human effort, and it raised man nearer to God. The widening of God's active human interest was at the same time the widening of man's interest in God. The Synoptists say more of God's interest than of man's interest. S. John's Gospel explains how men are induced to apply themselves to God. They belong to the one side or the other, to good or to evil. They are either not of the world or of the world. They love light or darkness. They judge themselves, they are their own criterion of their own character; by what they become they show what they deserve to become. Thus by their progress or the reverse they judge themselves. But no one can apply himself to God, draw nearer to God, obtain union with God, except on the principle of likeness. Like attracts like: it is a sympathetic attraction. But the likeness between man and God, if it is to act in this way, must be a moral likeness, a likeness of character. That is the likeness that is set up, or rather strengthened, by the Incarnation. Thus the Incarnation encourages union with Christ, it has a mystic force. Its mystic force is much more important than its doctrinal value. For that influences character, whereas the other influences thought. Mind affects character, but character is the effective sphere, even for action. The word 'character' is applied to Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the meaning of 'expression': He is called the expression of God's substance. Looking at Him, we see the marks which display the substance of God in Him. So the nature of Christ, communicated to us, shews itself in us, manifests itself in us. All the manifestations of Christ that appear in S. John's Gospel are so many indications of our reconstruction. They react from Him upon us, they produce the actual Christian, they are the ground of his development.

If there is no trace of the development of Christ Himself from the beginning, there are many indications of our development. It is conditioned by His personality. The branches grow on the Vine, and draw their nourishment from the Vine. They are part of the Vine, and without Him they would not grow, they would have no life. In different ways they show their life : Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman are examples. The growth is spiritual, for the union is spiritual. One metaphor of this spiritual union is eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood. Even if this is a direct reference to the Eucharist, it is still a metaphor. But it points to His humanity, it uses specifically human terms. It shows us our likeness to God, how near God has drawn to us. It points out the way in which we can apply the likeness.

We do not know ourselves in detail, we can only use all the indications that we have, so as to form a general idea of our personality. The personality of God is far more elusive, far less easy to sum up. Our own personality is difficult to estimate, and, if it is a clue to God's personality, that is much more difficult to comprehend and to explain. S. John states rather than explains. He exhibits rather than proves. But the explanation emerges from the statement, the proof from the exhibition. Such is his manifestation of Christ ; such, he implies, is Christ's manifestation of Himself. His great point is that Christ manifested Himself. If he describes a miracle, he calls it a sign, and he says that so Christ manifested His glory, and so His disciples believed on Him. But he implies that the sign strengthened rather than originated their belief. The seed was there, the growth followed.

It is maintained that the seed was the Incarnation. If God *could* assume a human nature, there must have been an inherent affinity in humanity to Divinity. Like appeals to like, but like also associates with like. Only the affinity must prove itself in the processes which result from the union. The

Evangelist's thesis is the self-evidence of the union. He appeals to persons in support of his thesis. What effect had the union on them? Did it extend itself to them, did it shew itself in them? We look to his own case as one of the proofs. We regard him as evidence of the power of the Incarnation. We say that if such a character could be produced there was something wonderful in the cause that produced it. We trace a likeness between the cause and the effect. We trace the effect to the cause because of the likeness.

"I and My Father are one"—that is Christ's contention. The Son is of the same substance as the Father, but the Son has His own personality. The presentation of God in the old revelation had failed to make its intended impression upon man. Religion is situated in the spiritual world, for God is Spirit. The spiritual sphere is maintained in the new revelation, only it is made more accessible. It is more closely adapted to man's comprehension. The water is made wine. S. John would say, "Thou hast kept the good wine until now." The spiritual world has been brought into closer touch with the material world and with the moral world. Man is on one side material, but on the other side he is spiritual. His morality becomes less material when it is spiritualized. Christ raised morality to the spiritual level. He presented a God who represented the claims of right over wrong. If I am moral, I ask myself whether I ought to do this or that. I refer the matter to God, and consider how He regards it. I do it because He considers it right, because that is my idea of His view. By putting the matter on this higher level, I raise it to the spiritual level. But I assume that He has a criterion of right and wrong, and I adopt His criterion. When Christ came, He adjusted the two criteria, the Divine and the human. He required us to subordinate the human criterion to the Divine criterion. He subordinated the one to the other in Himself. He presented a sphere in

which it could be subordinated, in which it actually was subordinated. The Incarnation is that subordination. But it combines the two spheres, it brings them into connexion, for the sake of more efficient action. And so our action is made more efficient.

But He did not confuse God and the world ; on the contrary, He emphasized the distinction between them. With Him, in S. John's Gospel, " the world " has an ethical meaning, indeed, a spiritual meaning. For each has a different criterion of value. What God values the world depreciates. But those who are in the world may adopt the criterion of value that belongs to the other sphere. The disciples did that, " the Jews " (as S. John calls them) did not. The view and the aims of the Jews were selfish, the disciples had learned to take an unselfish view, to form unselfish aims. That was due to the manifestation of Christ, due to their realization of His manifestation. He had given them power to become children of God, to transfer their interest from the one sphere to the other. They had realized that what had been made was life in Him. That life, so realized, was their light. Their quickened nature gave them a quickened understanding. We realize here S. Paul's meaning of the renewing of the mind, for the purpose of testing what is the will of God, and we realize that it is a transformation. For the Incarnation is itself a transformation. It is the union of the form of God, which expresses His essence, with the form of man, which expresses man's essence. That wonderful personality unites itself with those personalities which, already uplifted by Him, uplift themselves still higher to Him. He is in them, and they realize and develop His immanence. They do not forget His transcendence, for, indeed, it is this that gives value to His immanence. The Jews did not scoff at the transcendence of God, but they scoffed at the idea of its being a possible property of Jesus Christ. They isolated themselves in their assumed superiority. Their view of God was anthropomorphic,

but they had no conception of a possible theomorphic view of man. But S. John's Gospel starts with the idea of God. He does not take man and from his conception of man argue to what God must be, but he takes his view of God, and from that he obtains his view of the Word, and then he argues back from the Word to God. But, on the way, he shows what man has become and what he may become. The Word has manifested Himself, and has explained God, because He expresses God. But all along He is manifesting Himself in various ways, and these manifestations impress those who are ready to receive them with a cumulative impression. They are all proofs, signs of glory. The original glory is complete, the comprehension of it is gradual. It has nothing to add to itself, but there are many additions to be made to its acceptability. The conception of it grows as it is more clearly seen.

The only way of widening the conception is by personal intercourse. Knowledge of facts gives a grasp of history, personal knowledge gives a grasp of character. Spiritual knowledge of God involves union with God's personality. But it requires a knowledge of His personality, some conception of what He is, because we cannot be united with One Whom we do not know, if the union is to depend at all upon ourselves. Jesus does indeed say, " No one can come to Me, unless the Father that sent Me draw him," and He also said, " I will draw all men to Myself." But this implies that the relation is set up by God, it does not mean to represent human beings as machines. God may draw men by the influence of His personality, by making Himself known to them, but they may have to prosecute the inquiry and to accept the influence. For Jesus calls the knowledge of God and Christ eternal life, and to be drawn to God is only the beginning of knowledge of Him. It certainly starts the necessary intercourse, but intercourse implies the participation of each side. This participation is implied by S. John. He implies God's

interest in man, he demands man's interest in God. He says that no one has seen the Father but He that is from God. He adds, " He that believeth hath eternal life," having already said that He will raise up at the last day whoever comes to Him through the drawing of the Father. So that life is assured to those who come and also believe. The belief must be a consummation of the coming. The belief is making the coming a means of personal intercourse. But He Himself is the means of intercourse. " I am the bread of life . . . if any one eat of this bread he shall live for ever, and the bread which I shall give is My flesh on behalf of the life of the world." Now here is a direct reference to personality, presented indeed in human form. But it had to be so presented, in order to be grasped by His disciples. That was part of His manifestation. Their knowledge, to grow from more to more, must be related to their experience. There is no contention that it was a purely human experience, but it would have to be on the basis of that. For the special appeal of the Word was His presentation in human experience. From that position He was to rise in men's idea to the Divine character. All through the Gospel this idea is growing. Beginning with the first sign, He impresses His Divine personality upon His followers. In the raising of Lazarus, He shews Himself to be the Resurrection and the Life. He is what He does. He is able to do what He says that He is. Thus He is the Truth, the Reality.

The authors of the Synoptic Gospels do not profess that intimacy with Christ that S. John has a right to claim. Two of them were not of the inner circle of disciples at all. They write as possessed of the history of Christ, while he writes as knowing Christ's character and nature. They describe the kingdom of heaven, and he describes Christ Himself. No one would deny that the revelation of Christ's life is a revelation, or that it is an important revelation, but it is not equal to the revelation of His presence. It

is not equal either in importance or in influence. We are here dealing with a question of value, of ethical and spiritual value. Of course it will be said that the question of the Word is a metaphysical question, because it raises the question of the relation of the Son to the Father. But as regards man it is also a moral and a spiritual question. The relation of man to God does not depend solely upon the relation of the Son to the Father, but also upon the relation of the Word to humanity. The Word became flesh, we are told, and that impresses us even more than the consideration of the position held in the Godhead by the Word. It affects us morally and spiritually, because we belong to humanity. And this is the dominant idea of S. John's Gospel. Men, according to the view there presented, are masters of themselves. By their character and their actions they assess their position, they judge themselves. Jesus disclaims the function of a judge, but not the function of a supporter. In His absence, or His apparent absence, He will be represented in that capacity by another Advocate. This suggests intimate relations with His followers, it is a mystic claim. The claim is substantiated by His actual position, the position constituted by the Incarnation. It denotes the change from subjection to friendship. Christ does not abrogate the need of worship, for He does not separate Himself from God—"I and My Father are one." But He does associate Himself with man.

This is His special manifestation in S. John's Gospel. This association is more individual than social. Even when the Church is implied—and it is never referred to in set terms—it is referred to as consisting of individuals, more than as a society: "There shall become one flock." The additional promise, "There shall become one shepherd," gives an individual touch to the conception. In fact, the place of the Church is rather taken by the conception of life, of life depending on the assimilation of the life that is in Christ, that Christ is. The tendency

to personify abstract ideas, or to use concrete terms as descriptive of Himself, emphasizes this personal view. The pursuit of truth is devotion to Himself, and knowledge of Himself—"I am the Truth." The adoption of a method of life is devotion to Himself—"I am the Way." The realization, the principle of life, is devotion to Himself—"I am the Life." The taking of a definite step in religious action is devotion to Himself—"I am the Door." Submission to religious authority is devotion to Himself—"I am the Good Shepherd."

A new centre of thought and feeling and activity is provided—Christ Himself. He explains life, and so He is light as well. We know the effect of personal influence in human matters, we know how that determines character. Here we are shewn how it acts in religion. But life is shown to be religion. Christ does not propose to take His followers out of the world, in which they have their place and their duties, He only proposes to take them out of the evil of the world. And so He manifests Himself to them in His antagonism to the world. That antagonism is not self-chosen, it arises out of the exercise of free-will in the direction of refusing to acknowledge His authority. That authority is both Divine and human, Divine in its origin, human in its application. When it is acknowledged, the centripetal attraction of religion will assert itself—"I will draw all men to Myself."

S. John expresses the combination of spiritual and natural life in the symbolic incident which he attaches to his account of the Crucifixion, the water and the blood. But natural life is subordinated to spiritual life. Even the Crucifixion is a glorification, for which Christ Himself selects His own hour. It is part of His devotion of Himself to His own chosen purpose. Humanity is to realize the only way in which it can reasonably determine itself, the way of sacrifice, the method of subjection to a higher will. This is a new era in religion, but it is a necessary

method. The Word of God shows how it can be done. The Incarnation has extended the scope of free-will. God Himself subordinated His will; but not indiscriminately. There is here no submission to the rite of Baptism, no presentation to a definite temptation, no passage through the agony of Gethsemane. There is no insistence on the Virgin birth, no description of a definite Eucharist. But there is no refusal to symbolize these acts and these experiences. We cannot say that the Christ of S. John would have disclaimed these experiences, we can only say that the Evangelist does not actually describe them. But we acknowledge that his presentation of the Word is convincing.

"Abide in Me and I in you"—these words shew Christ as the centre of religion. They extend the principle of the oneness of God to the relation between God and man. Religion is not the choice of a certain way of life, but the realization of the meaning of life, its value. It is the determination to acknowledge reality. It does not create a certain course, but it adopts a course already marked out. I can select my friends or my interests according to my own free-will, but here I have to decide whether I will accept a certain friendship and a definite interest. It is a personality to which I stand in a special relation, and an interest of particular moment. Can I resist the appeal, and refuse the claim of the interest? "Will ye also go away?"—that is the question to the twelve. And the answer that may be made, that is made, is the acknowledgment, "Lord, to whom shall we go away? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Nor indeed the words only, but the life itself. Begun in this life during their intercourse with Him, the life which He promised was to them worthy of their devotion. One of them has professed to shew how worthy it was and is. We take him at his word, if we accept the manifestation of Christ, which he claims to have been made to him and to them.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHRIST OF THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

The dependence of two of the Synoptists upon one of their number is some ground for taking a summary view of their conception of Christ. It is generally acknowledged that S. John bears in mind their view when he states his own. The two ideas are sometimes held to clash, while on the other hand they are held to differ without clashing. The difference lies chiefly in their treatment of His personality. In the Synoptists He speaks and acts, in S. John's Gospel He is.

What is the object of the Synoptists in writing their several accounts? S. Luke states his object by saying that he wishes to confirm the current teaching of the life of Christ by which Christians have been trained. He will give them a book of reference by which they may adjust their remembrance of the teaching.

If this be so, the early oral teaching of Christianity does not include the Johannine view of Christ. If not, why not? Was it special, limited to a few, or was it a later development? If it was later, is it therefore unreal?

According to the Synoptic account, Jesus was born of Mary in a miraculous way (S. Mark omits this), He was baptized by John, He was tempted by Satan, He came into public notice in Galilee, the scene of His miracles and parables, He kept clear of Jerusalem, the centre of Jewish thought, till the very end of His life, He raised certain persons from the dead (not Lazarus, in actual mention), He instituted the

Eucharist, He was crucified, He rose from the dead, He ascended into heaven (S. Luke).

According to S. John, He spent most of His time in Jerusalem, He spoke no parables (none are mentioned), He worked seven signs (miracles), He raised Lazarus from the dead, He was crucified (at His own time and to His own glory), He rose from the dead.

According to the Synoptists, He gradually produces the impression of His Messiahship, but He called attention to Himself chiefly by His human acts, though there was clearly Divine power behind many of these. He did no sin, He died, rose and ascended, having commissioned His special followers to spread in the whole world that kingdom of heaven which it had been His special object to introduce on earth.

According to S. John He was the Messiah to His special followers from their first acquaintance with Him, indeed it was that conception of Him that attracted them, He spent much care in representing Himself to them as God and equal to God, He was God and man, He explained God to them and Himself as God, He made them conversant with His character and nature and position by word far more than by act, He glorified Himself by His death and not only by His Resurrection.

Are these two accounts both descriptive of His personality? Do they hang together, does one supplement the other, or must we accept one and reject the other?

It is said that the Synoptic Gospels bring out the humanity of Christ, whereas S. John brings out His Divinity. Clement of Alexandria says that John, realizing that bodily things had been set forth in the Gospels, wrote a spiritual Gospel, and this brings out the different point of view, while it does not imply, in the different treatment, a difference of subject-matter. It is possible to describe the humanity of Christ without controverting His Divinity, and even at the same time to imply His Divinity, just as it is possible to describe His Divinity without concealing His humanity. There is a pas-

sage in S. Matthew which illustrates this method: "No one knoweth the Son but the Father, and he to whomsoever the Son wishes to reveal Him." This is preceded by the words, "All things were delivered to Me by My Father." It occurs in almost identical language in S. Luke. We might easily have supposed it to be written by S. John, considering the relation of Christ to the Father which it implies. It speaks of 'the Father' and 'the Son,' and no one could insist on the hypothesis of mere humanity in face of the use of the name 'the Son,' and of its use in this connexion.

But in any case it was necessary to emphasize the human side of Christ's nature in the story of His life. We need to be reminded of His close relation to us, and to correlate His experience with ours. A history which begins, in two out of the three accounts, with the Virgin birth, cannot in all reasonableness be charged with describing a merely human life. Behind it, as behind the miracles which enforce it, lies the mystery of Divine power. If that Divine power did not flash suddenly upon those who witnessed its manifestation, it does not follow that the historians are unaware of its presence. Even if the acknowledgment of the disciples is gradually evoked, we cannot positively affirm that the history supposes it to have been gradually received or felt. We fall back upon its account of the Resurrection and of the Ascension, the end bearing out the beginning.

In S. John's Gospel there is no such uncertainty, if it be called uncertainty. The Word was God, and was rejected as God by some who ought to have known better. But all through, though not mentioned more than once by that specific name, He speaks and acts as the Word of God. He explains Himself continually and continuously, and it is clear that those who reject Him reject Him as what the author maintains that He is. 'I am,' He said, and it is His character and nature that S. John pre-

sents. There are details, but detail is not the method of his story. He is not concerned so much with time and place as with position in eternity. The life which he has in view is spiritual life, and the Christ Who is the Life takes the place of the kingdom of heaven.

The Synoptists assert that the purpose of Jesus was to proclaim the kingdom of heaven. They come nearer to its real significance when they call it the kingdom of God. They imply its real significance whenever they begin the parables by saying that the kingdom of heaven is like "a man." They bring out the personal character of the kingdom, which is not so much a society as dependence in a society upon an actual head. If, then, S. John describes the personality of Christ, the Synoptists allow the importance of His personality.

Had there been any intention to set the history above the person, there would have been general uniformity in these three accounts. The history would have been too important to allow of variety. The variety implies their own individuality and does not allow us to suspect their appreciation of the personality which they describe. Each in his own way and from his own point of view set forth the phenomenon which had appeared within the sphere of human thought and human life. He adjusted his presentation of that view to the special circle which his Gospel was intended to reach. If he addressed the Jews, as S. Matthew did, he relied upon Jewish prophecy, and pointed out how that bore upon the mission of Christ, how it affected His mission. He looked back to the past. S. Mark, on the other hand, looked to the present, he gave special attention to the revelation of Christ's nature in action, and, in its present form, his Gospel omits the Ascension. S. Luke had a wide view; he appealed to humanity at large, and in his Gospel Christ is represented as making that appeal. In contrast with these various appeals, more or less external, we have the internal

appeal of S. John, whose basis is contemplation rather than action, so that it throws the mind back upon the nature and character of Christ.

But it is one thing to emphasize a view, and quite another to make it exclusive. In his statement of the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, S. Mark proclaims Him as the Son of God. It is possible to set forth the humanity of Christ, with His Divinity always in the background. It is equally possible to emphasize His Divinity, without wishing to forget that it was manifested in humanity. Here the question of S. John's assumption is important. Did he ignore Christ's humanity, or did he assume it, without wishing to ignore it? The answer is found in his statement of the Incarnation, "The Word became flesh." It is impossible to present the Word in these terms and at the same time to neglect the fact which they involve.

We must suppose that S. John taught before he wrote. In his writing there are certain touches which reflect what we may suppose to have been his oral teaching. The traces of human sympathy which we find in his portrait of Christ preclude the idea of any deficiency in his conception of Christ's humanity. We have his recognition of Christ's appreciation of His mother's claim upon Him in the incident at the Crucifixion, which is so closely connected with himself, and his recognition too of Christ's tender handling of S. Peter in His reinstating of the erring Apostle after his denial. These are human touches, recognitions of the claims of humanity in its dependence and its weakness. They lie in the world of feeling and action, and they connect that world with the other world of contemplation.

So we may distinguish the Synoptists from S. John in regard to the practical and the contemplative study of Christ, without separating them. The accounts of Him which deal largely with miracle base the efficacy of each miracle upon faith. This is not faith in mere human power, but faith in

God. The faith inspired in S. John and taught by him does certainly depend upon more intimate knowledge, but, because it is produced by what Christ is, it is not therefore disjoined from what He did.

CHAPTER VIII

S. JOHN'S CONTEMPLATION OF CHRIST'S PERSONALITY

S. JOHN'S special reference to his own experience of Christ is contained in his first Epistle, where he speaks of having seen and heard and handled the Word of life. He makes this experience subjective when he says in his Gospel, "The Word lodged in us." The fact that a hut is temporary in regard to the material of which it is made and the method of its construction does not involve anything temporary in the actual abiding. The expansion of the meaning of life is against the temporary idea, and Christ's promise to abide in His followers implies a continued abode. There are many descriptions of Christ's nature in his Gospel, and these explain it from different points of view. But they all exhibit the ideal view, they personify all the abstract conceptions of Christ. Mental, moral, and spiritual conceptions of Christ gather up Christian methods and make them converge on one centre, which is a personal centre. In the philosophy of Plotinus there is the same central tendency, the contemplation of the soul is the flight of the alone to the Alone. The human soul rises towards the World-Soul in desire and contemplation. In the same way the Word of God attracts the contemplative spirit. One side of the nature of the Word is His glory, and that is a strong attraction to S. John. And so he shows how the signs that He worked brought out His glory. This agrees with his description of Christ as light. He says that the life was the light of men, and this refers the idea of light to the idea of life. What was the life revealed

in Christ to men? It connects His personality with its revelation in the Incarnation. The glory that was in Him was communicated to men in the Incarnation. They saw a light, and that assured them of the life. But S. John goes farther and makes the light the actual medium of the communication of the life. They did not merely become cognizant of the life that was in Christ, but they actually participated in it. It became theirs, because it was His. And so S. John calls the presence of God, in which the Incarnation makes men live, life, and eternal life. Eternal, because of its high character, its spirituality. The Incarnation takes us into another age than the one with which we are familiar, it introduces us into another environment, a spiritual environment. It has its own characteristic features, it is characterized by the presence of God. It is a unique age, and the life that belongs to it takes its very name—eternal life, life of the age—from that unique age. But this life comes direct from Christ. As a revelation, it is light, but in its own intrinsic essence it is life.

In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus does not say "Come unto Me, and I will give you life," but He says, "I will give you rest." In S. John's Gospel He says in effect "I give you life." Now 'rest' means relief from human conditions, but 'life' is participation in Divine conditions. On what ground is the idea of life attached to Jesus Christ? On the ground that He alone touches life on both its sides. It is inherent in Him, it is communicated by Him to those who are united to Him. It is not that He says on two occasions, "I am the Life," but that through each discourse and act He is the Life. The last Adam, says S. Paul, became a life-giving spirit. The Pauline contention is also the Johannine, for it is not only a question of life, but also of the connexion between Christ and the human race.

Religion is often explained as an elucidation of the meaning of life, but it is not so as a collection

of formulæ, however much they may express what life does mean. Only so far as it conducts to the source of life can religion be said to explain life. In S. John's Gospel we are taken to the fountain-head. That which hath been made was life in Him. God's revelation in Nature is one demonstration of life. But we are reminded that nothing was made without Him, and so we have a personal demonstration of life. The process and the result are elucidations of the source, but the source reveals its secret in itself. But we are carried back a yet further stage: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." We are carried back to the very Godhead, and so the revelation of life concerns man and Jesus Christ and God. But life links them together, and man lives from Jesus, and Jesus lives from God. That is the double bond of life, double not triple, for Jesus is God. And yet in one sense He stands between man and God, related by His combination of nature to man on one side and God on the other. So He is able to mediate life. He did not consider equality with God as a prize to be grasped, but, for all that, He had it, He had it even to lay it aside.

The idea of life is limited in the Old Testament. There it is often regarded as temporary, it does not convey the assurance of anything permanent. It seems to come to an end, it seems to depend for its value on prosperity or adversity. But the hint in the Book of Job that the sight of God is possible even apart from the flesh, and the constant phrase, "he slept with his fathers," suggest, if they do not establish, a belief in a continuance of life. Even so life is regarded as something inherent in the person who enjoys it, rather than as obtained from a source outside himself. But in the New Testament life is regarded as a gift. S. John shews that its only source is God. Whereas in the Old Testament it was physically regarded as residing in the blood, in the New Testament it is a form of the personality of God. Certainly a form, in S. John's Gospel, if

'form' expresses essence. Even man has the power of transmitting life, so strong is vital power, but God only has the power of conveying spiritual life. In this lies the difference between the two conceptions, a difference in character as well as in permanence. The two conceptions are of two different worlds, of two different values, of two different results. Indeed the causes differ, although in the last resort the cause in each case is God. But in the one case He acts, in the other case He personally intervenes.

The personal intervention is the Incarnation. This is not a case of creation but of manifestation. It is not a Theogony, but a Theophany. We are reminded by our Lord that even on the shewing of the Old Testament God is not the God of the dead but of the living. Thus the limitation of the idea of life to material life is expanded, and we get the idea of immortality. But this expansion is not the measure of the idea of life in S. John's Gospel. It is not actually impossible for physical life to be continued indefinitely, though that is against our present experience. But it has been shewn that continuance is not the only essential characteristic of the life that our Lord calls eternal. It does belong to it, but is not its sole determinant. The knowledge of God lifts a human being into the higher sphere of God's presence, it makes him aware of what he did not know before, and this is eternal life. But the knowledge of God is not acquaintance with a subject, it is not theology, but personal intercourse, the establishment of a definite relation. That relation was established by the Incarnation.

The difference between life as viewed in the Old Testament and life as viewed in the New Testament is a difference of kind not of degree. But into the eschatological idea of life the time question enters. Thus beside the difference of kind is introduced the question of degree, if continuance implies a difference of degree. It would not be fair to say that

S. Paul does not believe in eternal life, but it has been pointed out that he looks forward to a spiritual body, which implies a certain continuance of present elements. On the other hand, the eschatological idea is absent in S. John. He has increased the value of the present life, by giving it a difference of kind. At the same time, he does not imply its non-continuance. But that is not his point. His point is that there are two kinds of activity, spiritual and physical. There is no physical activity in God, although matter is His instrument and one of the spheres in which He works. But matter has nothing to do with the method or motive of His working. For His is the spiritual method. Now it is noteworthy that you cannot take physical activity and apply it to the spiritual world, whereas you can take spiritual activity and apply it to the material world. This is what Jesus Christ does. He contributes life, which is spiritual activity, to the solution of the riddle of human existence. But He does not simply indicate that this is the solution, He applies the actual solvent Himself. He does not simply introduce His life into the world, but He puts His life into the personalities of those who constitute the world. Thus He equips them for their task of playing their parts in the world. He directs their activity by infusing into it a higher activity. Nor does this higher activity simply work on its own lines. They are not lifted out of one sphere into another, but remaining in their own sphere they receive the tone, the spirit, of another. Their idea of value is transformed, but the area of their experience remains the same. Consequently the area is really transformed.

One side of the transformation is motive. They have a different purpose, because the motive power within them which suggests their purpose and enables them to carry it out is now different. But the change is organic, and is therefore described as a new birth. It is also obvious, hence the use of the word ' light.'

Light is not only visible in itself, but is also the medium through which other objects become visible. We see the light, but it also enables us to see various objects which are not light. It also obscures other dimmer lights. It also brings darkness into contrast with itself, shews up the darkness of the darkness. We look then at God, and through Him we look at that which is not God. We see God and humanity. But activity gives us this knowledge of God and this knowledge of humanity. Now this was not the way in which Christ Himself brought Himself into relation with humanity. On the contrary, He introduced humanity into Himself. He brought it into the sphere of His activity, He did not simply introduce His activity into its sphere. Thus humanity has an internal relation to God, it is inspired with God's activity. It is not merely the object of His activity. It is not simply acted upon, it is inspired to act for itself. And the activity is conscious, for the life is also the light. Now the use of the same word ' life ' applied to human activity as to Divine activity must not mislead us into the notion that they both have a character in common. No doubt the one is derived from the other, the human from the Divine, but for all that they are of a different character and tend to produce different results. When, however, the Incarnation took place and the Word became flesh, the lower kind of life had the opportunity of being influenced by the higher. Not by way of substitution, but by way of inspiration. What man could not do for himself was done for Him by God. His nature was changed, as in the miracle at Cana the water was changed into wine. Water is different from wine, though there is a common characteristic belonging to them both. Spiritual activity is different from physical activity, though each partakes of life that comes from God.

In the Incarnation the dominant idea is not the communication of life, but the inspiration of life. The gift of life is an internal process, not an

external gift. The branches grow in the vine, they take their nourishment, their life, from the life to which they are organically attached. They are part of the vine, and it is this that makes them capable of living its life. If they were separate, they would not have its life. Spiritual activity is not something that can be imitated, at least imitation is not an effective condition of its power. But it constitutes a motive working from within. What Christ has done for humanity is to put Himself into each human personality and demand that it shall not resist His inspiration, but welcome Him and co-operate with Him. Thus it makes itself one with Him in thought and feeling and will, or rather it allows itself to be so made one with Him. This is participation, conscious self-identification with Christ. It arises out of His identification of Himself with humanity. He has grafted His activity upon our activity, for He came that we may have life, and have it in a surpassing measure. No wonder that He said, "Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves."

The communication of life is both metaphysical and ethical. It connects humanity with what is higher than itself, and it transforms the actions of humanity. But it does this by transforming the human idea of value. On the one hand humanity lowers its valuation of itself by seeing how far inferior it is to God, and on the other hand humanity raises its valuation of itself by realizing the new value which God has given to humanity. The purpose of S. John's Gospel, as stated by himself, is that men may believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and further that this belief may make them have life in His name. If he meant by belief simply an acknowledgment of a fact, then it might be said that His name was efficacious. But, if he meant by 'belief' a surrender of one personality to another, and by 'name' all the essential qualities of that other

personality, then we can account for his contention that Jesus Christ has power to change the face of human activity and that He has actually changed it. His name has an influence which is beyond mere hearing and sight. Now belief may take one of two places in regard to experience. It may start the experience or it may crown it. I may believe that a certain person exists and that he has certain qualities and powers, and I may decide either to let myself be influenced by him or to keep myself outside his influence. Still I believe the fact. On the other hand, if I decide to allow him to enter into my experience and to use his qualities and powers for my benefit, I get a different idea of their value by my experience of them. I know personally what they are and what they can do. Then I believe in him to a different degree. This is the idea that S. John attaches to belief in Jesus Christ. It is with him practical and assured belief. It is founded upon actual experience, not upon mere knowledge. The manifestations of Christ might suggest belief, but it was their actual grip upon those who experienced them that produced effective belief. Belief was the final result of a process, not the initial assent to the possible result of the process. To be effective, it must be effected. It is a direction of the disposition, not an attraction of the attention. It does originally attract the attention, but it holds it, and in the end intensifies it, concentrates it, justifies it, inspires it. Then belief becomes conviction.

Jesus told His disciples that they would do greater works than the signs which shewed His power. He meant that His personality working on theirs and with theirs would produce a wonderful effect. He meant that the union of God with humanity was the only effective process for human life. His activity would so combine with theirs that the results would be stupendous. They would not simply know that there is a higher activity than that which ordinarily works in human experience, but would feel its

presence and its force. They would be intelligent and perceptive witnesses of spiritual activity. They would have life in themselves, by reason of their intimate relation to Him. The Jews claimed to know God and resented the suggestion that they did not know Him. Jesus maintained that their ignorance of Himself precluded their knowledge of His Father. It is the growing knowledge of God that constitutes life. To know God is to have Him in the inner nature, to have His activity working through the human activity, to have assimilated God so that He becomes part of the very nature. This is vital knowledge, this is life.

But knowledge is an act of the reason. The mere presentation of God does not involve knowledge. The question of the form of the presentation enters into its acceptability. Its acceptability depends upon the fulness of the presentation and the extent to which the presentation is realized. Now it is impossible to understand God without applying the conceptions of God that are formed in the mind to actual life. Knowledge is moral as well as intellectual. But even moral knowledge is not complete knowledge. Right action is better than wrong action, but the knowledge of right action will not in itself produce a right action. And so we are led on to the need of spiritual knowledge. This means looking at life from God's point of view, adopting His standard, identifying oneself with Him. But, if there is any antagonism with God the identification fails, and the point of view will be given up. Consequently it is necessary that a definite basis should be adopted, on which the point of view will be the same. This, on S. John's showing, is the basis of life. The same life, existent in man as in God, will supply the necessary basis. Men will think, will feel, will act with God, because they *are* with God. As Jesus Himself assumed the prerogative 'I am,' so man must assume his prerogative 'I am.' He must base his activity on a compelling force within him, lying at

the root of his activity. It will be an activity that makes him what he is, that constitutes his very nature. This can be nothing else but life, for there is no other power that makes us live. This is the power that Jesus has communicated to men. It makes them subject to Him, it fulfils the condition of obedience that is an absolute requirement in the case of two combined activities, of which one is superior to the other. The obedience lies in the subjection of will to will, in allowing the Divine activity to guide the human activity. It lies in the submission of the human personality to the Divine personality.

But it is the life of the Incarnate Christ that is communicated to man. The relation of man to God in Christ sets up the relation of each believer to Christ, and forms its organic basis. It is not the relation of the Son to the Father that establishes the parallel, but the human and Divine relation existing in Christ Himself. So that life introduces in each one of us such a condition as prevails in Christ Himself. Not that there is an incarnation for us, but that the efficacy of the Incarnation attaches itself to our union with Christ, and makes that union possible and effective. The Incarnation has its bearing on life as being the vehicle of the conveyance of life. By the Incarnation our human activity is absorbed into the spiritual activity which is the necessary condition of real life.

This was the idea which S. John had contemplated and which he set forth in his Gospel. "I am the Life" means also "the life which alone can quicken you is Myself." We are not to separate action from contemplation, for then life would lose its meaning of activity. But, when life is transmitted from one person to another, there are transmitted with it the powers of life. The person who receives it has his own personality, and acts upon his own responsibility. S. John did not suggest that his life was automatic, he only suggested that it is derived. Otherwise he would not have understood the right

meaning of " I am the Way." But the method of life, as well as the principle of life, is derived from Christ. Indeed it is implanted in the believer, together with the vital principle. S. John's method is contemplation, because the vital principle is developed in contemplation. Contemplation is the turning of the attention to the central principle of religion, it is the direction of the personality towards its definite purpose, not to the exclusion of other purposes, but by their inclusion in the central purpose. If the personality is so possessed, its interests are similarly possessed. S. John was not a stranger to other sides of knowledge, indeed he has enlisted them in the service of his one thesis. But he would have traced them to one source, and he regarded them as contributing to the object that he had set before himself. But contemplation is not absorption, and life is not destructive of the life that it quickens. The Incarnation combined humanity and Divinity without impairing either, and Divinity that gives life to man maintains and indeed increases the dignity of humanity. S. John's Gospel is a story of the life of Christ. It shews how He lived, by implying His influence on one of those who had contemplated His life. It shews not, as the Synoptists did, the action which manifests the character, but the character which inspires the action. It is the story which only he could write who had contemplated the character and understood the meaning of ' life ' as the key to the influence of the personality of Christ upon kindred personalities. The life had been the light of S. John, before it could be his life of Christ to Christian readers.

The principle of life as the characteristic of union with Christ will become the motive of Christian life in this or any age only on the conditions which S. John has laid down on the lines of his own experience. It is what he knows that he tells us, not what he has been recommended to believe. He indicates to us the same way of knowledge. It

might have been that by experience Christians would discover for themselves the principle that union with Christ is life. But they are asked to believe that life is the active principle of their union with Christ and to proceed upon this principle. They start with the belief that the Incarnation is the foundation of their religion, and they have it explained to them that it is a living foundation, a vital principle. Living and vital, because it is the means of the communication of life. This S. John knew by his own experience, this contact of human personality with Christ's personality he has described in his Gospel.

CHAPTER IX

S. PAUL'S VIEW OF CHRIST'S PERSONALITY

We have seen how S. Paul deals with the theory of the Incarnation, how he denies any loss of Divinity, while he asserts a deliberate waiving of certain manifestations of Divinity on the part of Christ. This belongs to the self-renunciation which is involved in the sacrifice and obedience of Christ. He seems to lay more stress than S. John upon the actions of Christ, in so far as he insists on the need of glorying in the Cross of Christ. According to S. John, however, Christ gloried in that Himself. But he does say, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body." And that explains his insistence on the Resurrection. Life is a decisive factor in the relation of the Christian to God. We were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, but much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved in His life. Not 'by His life,' but 'in His life,' as being the sphere in which the result is secured. It is true that the personal influence of life is not insisted on, but the manifestation of the life of Jesus in us and our salvation in His life combine to constitute the principle of life as a telling factor.

On the other hand, S. Paul lays great stress on faith as a determining element in the Christian position. He makes it the foundation of the human relation to God. But he calls that relation a new creation, and he contrasts the later state of the man after the new relation is set on foot with his previous state by calling it a putting on of the new man in

distinction from the old man which has been put off. Thus faith may be regarded as the attitude taken up towards the offer made by God in Christianity. Faith is the acceptance of the position offered. The question is whether there is anything supplied to the man which inclines him to accept the offer, whether anything in faith corresponds with the life which, according to S. John, the believer receives. What does S. Paul mean, for example, by being in Christ? Is there a close connexion between being in Christ and being saved in His life?

S. Paul does not press the doctrine of the Incarnation. The life of Christ means for him the Resurrection. But this is communicated to man; in Christ shall all be made alive. Nor is it merely a promise of life; Christ lives in me. There is an interpenetration of personalities, there is actual union with Christ. He may have thought that the doctrine did not need to be pressed, that it was an axiom, and, so far, beyond argument. He does not press the Divinity of our Lord, though his account of his own experience is far from suggesting any idea that it could have been less than a Divine experience. But, as regards the relation of the Son to the Father in the Godhead, he does declare that in the end the Son will be subject to the Father, that God may be all in all, that all creation may find its completion in God. At the same time he tells the Colossians that in Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, which corresponds with S. John's statement of the Word becoming flesh. He wishes to correct any idea of a mere emanation from God, to combat any depreciation of the Godhead of Christ. In the same letter he describes Christ as the image of God, not only representing God but also manifesting God. Christ is superior to all creation in time and in authority, He is the first-born of all creation.

In a disputed passage, S. Paul represents Christ as God blessed for ever, according to the more usual explanation. This would leave no doubt as to his

view of Christ. But, apart from this, we see that the position taken up by him at his conversion is maintained: to him Christ is the Son of God. And his comparison of the two types of humanity represented by the first Adam and the last Adam brings out the completeness of Christ's humanity. The question is whether he traces an inherent influence on humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. Adam is the representative of humanity from the standpoint of its weakness, Christ is the representative of humanity from the standpoint of its reconstruction. The value of the contrast lies in the similarity of essential conditions, of which such a different use is made. It assumes and argues from the complete humanity of Christ. And in each case the position is generic, not individual, it is man that is in question. Then again there is the connexion between the representative and the class. Human beings are one with Adam in nature, in nature they are made one with Christ. Their identification with Adam involves death, their identification with Christ involves life. But we must notice the source of this life. It is Christ, but through the Resurrection. In S. John's Gospel we have the same source of life, but it is through the Incarnation. Can we connect the Resurrection so closely with the Incarnation as to trace the same idea of the connexion between Christ and the believer in S. Paul and S. John? The Resurrection certainly depends on the Incarnation. S. Paul says that Christ was designated as the Son of God by an act of power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead. But he does not say that He *became* Son of God by the Resurrection. Supposing that there is any question as to Who is the Son of God, the Resurrection decides this question in favour of Jesus Christ. But He was the Son of God already, as is also implied in the reference to the spirit of holiness, which accounts for the Resurrection on the ground of the correspondence of the nature of the Son with the nature of the Father. So that we have

to go farther back for the source of that nature, back to the Incarnation. It is interesting that the same word 'designate' is applied by S. Paul to the other side of Christ's personality, the human side, in his speech to the Athenians, but also in connexion with the Resurrection: "He appointed a day in which He intends to judge the world in righteousness in the man whom He designated, having given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead." We have, then, clear proof that even apart from the Resurrection Christ's Divine and human personality is established as a fact by S. Paul.

But can we trace a connexion with this doctrine in S. Paul's theory of redemption? The human factor in the process of redemption he declares to be faith, which means the human acceptation of some act or attitude of God. In S. Paul's view, based on his individual experience, faith is a conviction of a truth. But this leads to an examination of the conviction formed by members of his own communion, of whom Abraham is a typical representative. The conclusion that he arrives at is the superiority of the faith that depends on Jesus to any other kind of faith. This is traced to connexion with Christ, to the moment when that connexion is established. Those who are baptized into Christ (which expresses the idea of internal, intimate union) may also, by another metaphor, be said to have put on Christ (which implies external union). That is to say, union with Christ is both an internal and an external process. The combined process establishes the sonship of God (Gal. iii. 26, 27). But what distinguishes the internality from the externality of the process? Can we go back to the Incarnation and say that it has a twofold influence, as an organic change and a communicated conviction? In that case the act of faith is twofold: it is consciousness of an organic change and an intellectual or emotional perception of an idea, indeed a perception that is both intellectual and emotional, involving the feelings as

well as the mind. Possibly we might say that the consciousness of an organic change is a spiritual consciousness. Is this the meaning of S. Paul's reiterated phrase 'in Christ'? Christians are to consider themselves living unto God in Christ Jesus. The life that Christ lives He lives to God. This is in reference to the Resurrection. This life of Christ unto God is the ground of a similar life of men. By it men may recognize and realize their own condition of life. The life of Christ determines not only their view of a fact but the actuality of the fact. But the Resurrection has been shown not to create a position but to establish a position, and the position has been carried back to the Incarnation. Thus 'in Christ' expresses an earlier position, and connects S. Paul's view of the human relation to Christ with S. John's view.

The dominant idea of S. John's Christology is the idea of life, which is kept quite separate from the idea of death. But in S. Paul the idea of life is connected with the Resurrection, and that necessarily involves the Crucifixion. Again and again he lays stress on the Cross of Christ and maintains the human connexion with that. He glories in the Cross of Christ, which is not the same as Christ's regarding it as a means of glorification. Still he connects the idea of life with the Resurrection, and so his idea of life predominates over his idea of death. But, if the Resurrection of Christ is an argument for human resurrection, and if human resurrection is a proof of spirituality, then the idea of life does predominate, and has a spiritual significance. The soulish (natural) body precedes the spiritual body, but is not superior to it, for it gives way to it. Life predominates over death in the conception of S. Paul, and it is in connexion with a revival that he lays so much stress on the idea of death. The very fact that he clearly maintains the persistence of the body in human personality as part of his conception of immortality proves the grasp that he has on the

idea of life. Life prevails even on the lower side of human nature. In discussing the conflict between the two sides of human nature, the conflict between the spirit and the flesh, he crowns his belief in the possibility of success to the spiritual side by an expression of gratitude to God for His help towards the victory in which Christ is the mediating cause. But how is Christ the mediating cause? By His life in the struggler, in the believer. Christ, he says, is in you. "If the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken even your mortal bodies." Here is the idea of life, future indeed, but present as far as indwelling goes.

It is the indwelling that counts. It carries us back to the Incarnation. Implication is an argument, as much as is direct statement. We never have a direct mention of the Virgin birth in S. Paul, but neither do we have it in S. John. But we do have a reference to the manifestation in the flesh (1 Tim. iii. 16), and that is enough for some of us. The many references in S. Paul to spiritual life imply a conception of Divinity, and of our connexion with Christ on His Divine side. Of all spiritual gifts he counts love to be the highest, and the most wonderful way that he shews us is the way of love. He has not directly said so, but he implies that life is the basis of love. He has not directly said that God or Christ is Love, but he may be supposed (as has been suggested) to set forth Christ in his description of love. Life, the Resurrection of Christ proved to be the dominant factor in Christ's personality, is the basis of our union with Him. Granted that faith is essential, that does not substitute the perception of life for life itself. Indeed, it implies a more fundamental basis, for to grasp implies something to grasp. Faith is specially referred to Abraham, but Abraham believed in what he did not see with his eyes. He saw the life of the future: in the words of S. John, he saw the life which would in the future be realised in Christ.

It is significant that the Athenians attributed two gods to S. Paul's religion, Jesus and the Resurrection. This is only another way of saying that he was a worshipper of life. It is quite true. But he did not conceive of life as conferred by the Resurrection, but of life as assured by the Resurrection. We can only infer that S. Paul traces God's communication of life to man to the Incarnation. Christ lives in me—that is to say, I get life from Christ. But it comes from His personality, and it is an internal communication. I must grasp it intellectually and perceive it emotionally, but it is in myself that I grasp it and feel it. Justification is part of the life process, but it is not all, it is only the outcome of the nature of Christ in which I have my share.

CHAPTER X

THE SOLIDARITY OF HUMANITY

The solidarity of humanity is confirmed by the fact that Christ became, not a man, but man. The individuality of human personality depends on the existence of many human personalities. No one can regard himself apart from his fellows. It is in connexion with his fellows that he grasps his own individuality.

The life of Christ has been sometimes studied as the life of a man. Had it been that, it would have been a wonderful phenomenon, and a wonderful example. It might also have been regarded as an instance of God's method, by which He chose a special nation to exhibit His way of dealing with men. In that case He might have been supposed to choose a special man to be a special instance of what He expected men to be. But on what ground would He have made His choice? Would He have foreseen certain special characteristics as qualifying this one person to be a special example? In that case, we should have known God's idea of human excellence, and might have been induced to imitate it in our lives. But there would have been no inducement to us beyond the persuasion of a high ideal. There would have been no uplifting of our own character and nature from within.

But suppose that we go farther and assume that God put Divinity into this special man. We should still have had an example to follow, a higher example it is true, but one absolutely separate from ourselves. We should have had to set ourselves to imitate the

qualities of God and the qualities of a man. What impulsion from within would have been given to us ? The pressure would have been entirely from without, and no doubt that is a valuable incentive.

But, if individuality implies and requires the presence and the consciousness of other personalities besides our own, then we have to reckon with our dependence upon one another. We have, in fact, to take into account the solidarity of humanity. This is what God has taken into account in His scheme of redemption. The relation of God to man is a panhuman relation. It concerns humanity at large. We refer the creation of man to a single instance, but this is really an acknowledgment of a general scheme of creation. What appears in one instance implies characteristics which will appear in the whole race. In the same way the intervention of God for the benefit of the whole human race must have a universal effect, and, to have this universal effect, must rest upon a universal basis. It must not only be open to all, but must actually affect all. So we have to imagine a scheme for humanity, which must affect, not merely interest, all humanity. It would have been very interesting to us to have amongst us a Divine and human Person, who, combining God's nature with our nature, would show us how the likeness of man to God is possible as an ideal. But the practical side of the question asserts itself, and we are brought up by the consideration of the value of this ideal. It is without doubt magnificent, but would it be effective ? Now the effectiveness of an ideal lies in its persuasiveness as well as in its magnificence, and here the persuasiveness is purely external. But suppose the ideal to be implanted in humanity, and then you get an efficient cause which works by inward impulsion. It becomes, not a possible, but a positive factor. This is what has been done by God's reconstruction of humanity, by the Incarnation. It is now established, not that humanity may improve, but that humanity has

improved. Humanity has been put on a fresh basis by receiving Divinity into its very constitution. It has received a fresh accession of life, internal life, inherent life. It has been admitted within the Divine nature, with all the advantage that such an admission involves. The ideal is within ourselves, so that we do not simply look to a Divine personality to inspire us, but we feel His inspiration in ourselves. We enjoy the benefits of our humanity at large, and, as individuals, we draw upon the solidarity of humanity.

It is argued that, as the deterioration of the individual depends upon his relation to the whole race, so it is reasonable that his elevation should depend upon the same relation. He remains, in his deterioration, a member of humanity, and, in his elevation, he is equally a member. The Incarnation employs this membership as a factor in its purpose. At the same time, it does not substitute force for persuasion. But it applies its persuasion along organic lines. God, who claims to be the ' I Am,' declares to humanity, ' Thou art.' He bestows on humanity the virtue, the power, which constitutes it to a closer fellowship with Himself. This no doubt is limited by the declaration ' Thou mayest be,' in order to preserve the rights of human free-will. But the second declaration does not preclude the first, it only gives an extension to the first, and so preserves the character of a persuasion.

The point is the all-embracing scope of the Incarnation. There is no contention against the personality of Jesus Christ, His Divine and human personality, but it is contended that God's method was considered from the standpoint of effectiveness, and that what He did He did well. He approached humanity and He dealt with humanity on a broad basis, because He wished to apply His action to each individual. He took advantage of the solidarity of humanity, to ensure individual advantage. He emphasized individualism by this method. It is always allowed that

Christ died for humanity and rose for humanity, and there is no reason why He should not have lived for humanity. He lived for humanity best by living in humanity. He is life in us, and we, human beings, have life in Him.

Nor is there any real danger that the life of Christ, His living force, should evaporate by this method. His Incarnation is so far personal and individual that it takes effect in and through His personality. We have a Divine personality to which we may attach ourselves, although our union with Him is effected by His immanence in our race. But the application of this immanence is individual, inasmuch as it rests with the individual nature to make use of the opportunity which it shares with all the members of humanity. Because I belong to the human race, I have certain qualities which I owe to my humanity. Because I belong to the human race, I have the privilege which is conferred by the Incarnation. It is shared, but it is mine. And, as its direction is in the end individual, so its limitations are individual. I may not appreciate the value of my privilege, I may lose its advantages, while I do not lose its possession. If it is my privilege to have, it is my responsibility to be. But what I am, or may be, depends originally on God. His is the gift, I am under the influence of what S. Paul calls God's grace. This has been given to humanity at large, it is His reconstruction of humanity. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son": His love was general, His gift not merely individual. But the general gift was included in Christ's individual personality. It was limited to Him, but not limited in His application of it. Only, while it covers humanity, it is applied individually. Its universal extension makes its individual application possible.

In the same way we see the Holy Spirit bestowed on the whole Church. This again implies the solidarity of humanity. But the advice to walk in the Spirit is equally an acknowledgment of individuality.

Every person who feels within himself the opposing force of physical passions needs to direct himself towards that opposite influence, which works in the society of believers without wishing to pass over any member of the society. The Advocate, Who would defend the cause of humanity, would do so by individual advocacy. He would attach Himself to the mass, but He would identify Himself with individual action. However general the influence might be, it would appeal to the feelings of each personality. There would be no exclusiveness, but there might be individual responsiveness. It was a free gift, but conditioned by human free-will.

Now those who share a privilege vary in their enjoyment of it. They all have it, and it may be that they all would resent being left out, but it does not follow that they all give practical proof of gratitude for what they have. Manhood suffrage does not ensure that all men *will* vote, but at least it ensures that all men *may* vote. At any rate they stand on an equality.

God has not established the equality of men, absolute equality, but He has maintained the solidarity of humanity. He has, in fact, emphasized it by His method of acknowledging it. He has done what affects all humanity. He has not selected individuals for His gratuitous mercy. The selection rests with themselves, according as they take advantage of His mercy or not. But, at any rate, whatever they do, their position is improved, they start from an improved position. The improved position is the new impetus given to humanity by its closer association with God in the Incarnation. If Christ had become a man, we might say that He had given humanity a better opportunity. As it is, He has done something for humanity, which, even apart from its use of opportunity, is a definite uplifting of humanity, a real reconstruction. "Thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honour." It is position that counts

even more than opportunity. For the improved position gives force to the opportunity, when that also is offered, just as the establishment of health makes it possible to lead a healthy life.

But what has been done for all does not bar individual effort, for man retains his individuality, for all the solidarity of humanity. And so we see various grades of development of Christian character. If character means the stamp put upon molten metal or softened wax, then the nature of the metal or the wax has to be taken into account. The farmer can improve the soil on which he works, but the nature of the soil will always help to determine its final quality. In the parable of the Sower we have to remember that the cultivator need not have allowed the path to be made across his field, he might have cut away the rock which came so near the surface, he might have cleared out the thorns. So the fact that Christianity has started the amelioration of humanity does not justify contentment with the advance that has been made, any more than the possession of a certain standard of income by a number of persons guarantees that the standard will be uniformly preserved amongst them.

But we have in Christianity the capacity for development. An organic change implies the possibility of organic growth, especially when the change is of Divine origin. And so, while confidence is established, there is all the more need for that form of it which appears as self-reliance. Faith is supported by determination. Faith grows into more conscious faith. "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." The Incarnation encourages the feeling of self-respect, than which there is no more powerful quality for the direction of life. But the direct fruit of the Incarnation is life, the God-given root of self-determination. By the Incarnation we have the means of determining ourselves, of developing each his own personality. And so Christianity ranks as a natural religion. Drawn towards God by Christ's elevation

of humanity, we can apply our efforts towards the attainment of the end of humanity, the glory of God. Humanity presents a solid phalanx in face of the difficulties that oppose it, by virtue of the position that it has received, the spirit that inspires it. If it is one in its purpose, it is also one in its qualification for fulfilling that purpose. And the fact that it is one helps to define the purpose, makes the way of carrying out the purpose easier. We have reason to be grateful that the mission of Christ to humanity was based on a method calculated to promote such a union as is bound to be in itself strength.

CHAPTER XI

THE INCARNATION SUGGESTS IMITATION

The famous work of devotion entitled *On the Imitation of Christ* and the oft-repeated term "the Christ-like life" suggest the possibility of making the Incarnation a practical method of life. While it is true that the Incarnation is a unique fact, it is also true that we are made in the likeness of God. There is therefore no presumption in striving to complete that likeness. The principle of the Incarnation is that there is an affinity between the Divine and the human, so that there is no suggestion of Christ's having achieved the impossible. What He did is not a contradiction in terms. S. Paul is the great champion of imitation: he claims it as his own method, and he recommends it to those whom he is persuading or has begun to persuade. "This is My commandment," says our Lord Himself, "that ye love one another as I have loved you": this is a clear recommendation of imitation. Now the fundamental virtue of the Incarnation is the principle of love. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son": Divinity combines with humanity in the spirit of love. "We love," says S. John, "because He first loved us." It has been shewn that the Incarnation is the elevation of humanity nearer to God. Our aim then is to be that we may raise our humanity still nearer to God, so far as that is possible to human effort. To do this, we have first of all to form some conception of God. The first conception may be of His greatness, His superiority

to us, His distance from us. If that conception is preserved, we may get the idea of worship, but we do not get Christianity. For Christianity is nothing, if it does not add the idea of God's immanence to the idea of God's transcendence. And that implies nearness. The first disciples did not spend so much time with their Master without possessing that idea of nearness. They asked Him questions, which is always a sign of the sense of accessibility. When the Word became flesh, the idea of accessibility was suggested. God had drawn nearer to man, therefore man might draw nearer to God.

One incentive to imitation, then, is the feeling of God's accessibility and the practice of it. One form of the practice is prayer. The word 'prayer' suggests request: we ask God to supply a need that we feel. But the value of prayer lies in its attitude and its process rather than in its definite result. Prayer is the attitude of man to God. Just as in the Incarnation humanity is drawn nearer to God, so in prayer the worshipper begins at least by putting himself in God's presence. He cannot expect to get all that he asks for, indeed he does not always know what is best for him, and he may even be inclined to ask for what he desires rather than what is for his real good, but at least he shews that he believes in God's presence, which is the foundation of religious belief. The Word Who became flesh constantly maintained this intercourse between God and man, for it was this that constituted His nature. We, in the practice of prayer, are imitating that intercourse, and we are encouraging our religious sense on the model set up by Christ. Thus prayer may be really used as another name for worship, of which the highest form is the Holy Communion, for in that service we combine thanksgiving with request, and make our offering to God in a form sanctioned by His own command. Here, even more explicitly, the human and the Divine are combined, the Divine presence and the human offering of self.

Here God is accessible to us in a form of His own providing, here He gives us our daily bread.

Another point of imitation is sacrifice. To become man God yielded up certain manifestations of Divinity, without conceding one iota of the Divine essence. Becoming man, He subjected Himself to temptation, and even to the negation of Divine knowledge, to the cares and privations of human life, to the agony, spiritual and physical, of death. We, on the side of humanity, have our sacrifice to make. We have to learn by suffering. It is not easy for us to subject our will to God's, but in the light of the Incarnation we may learn to see our way clear. What we endure is not worthy to be compared with future glory, but it is worth while in view of that future glory. It is an imitation that falls infinitely short of the original, but it is a proof of sincerity, an assurance of reality. It contains obedience and love, both conspicuous in the original. If the Good Shepherd received also the name of the Lamb of God, it is fitting that He should guide His sheep in His own way of sacrifice.

Yet another point of imitation is persistence. All human efforts justify their beginning only by their continuance. There is no possibility of deserting a purpose that has been deliberately planned. Its preparation is the measure of its accomplishment. Wherefore we faint not (because of the manifestation of life which has been revealed to us), but, even if our outward man is being destroyed, yet our inward man is being renewed day by day. The Divine life predominates over the human, the spiritual over the material, the eternal over the temporal. The process advances as it is maintained, and in the imitation of Christ the personality is preserved by deliberate loss.

The crowning point of imitation is love. God so loved the world, and Christ so expressed the love of God, that love is the only answer to the great act of love. It is an imitation of motive even more

than of act. There are actions that confer good on others and actions that involve loss to oneself, which lose the good and waste the loss because they express no loving motive. They are of the letter, not of the spirit, they do not rank as Divine reflexions or satisfy even human standards of value. But, when we act up to the best that we know, contributing to it all the wealth of our nature and character and life, then we do as Christ did, we give because we love.

The height of religion is the practice of the Incarnation. Religion is the meeting-point of Divinity and humanity; it expresses God, it elevates man. Activity is the Amen of the Creed, whereby "I believe in God" is translated into Christian practice. Dogma dies in the letter, doctrine lives in the spirit. It is not enough to know that the Word became flesh, because the activity of the Word proved itself only in fact, amongst the men for whom He emptied Himself, in the humanity which He lifted nearer to Himself. In the presence of God man lives his life, and apart from God he cannot be said to live. "It is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me." Thus S. Paul acknowledges that the influence of God predominates in his personality, so that it is possible to say that the life of Christ supersedes his own life. This is only possible in the light of the Incarnation, for, apart from that, the transcendence of God would remain paramount. The activity of God has found a sphere for itself in the creation that He made. S. John claims this influence for the whole of Nature, "that which has been made was life in Him." But man's predominance in Nature is recognized, and the sphere of God's activity is pre-eminently humanity. Each human being may claim his share in this immanence, for he was originally made in the likeness of God, and so he is specially open to this special possession. We notice that S. Paul describes the possession as life. He is in agreement with S. John as to its determining quality. When we think of activity, we think particularly

of life. It is life that characterizes action, and the union of God and man, by the life that it introduces, gives direction, and indeed meaning, to action. We say that to serve God is to reign, because the subjection of our will to His gives His will a dominance which uplifts each one, who effects that conscious subjection, towards the Divine authority in which he willingly acquiesces. And so our actions become more essentially a part of the world-scheme, now by the Incarnation made more directly Divine than before. We do not claim to be as our Lord was, for we are quite conscious of the weakness of our humanity, but we do claim an interest in His Divine condescension, an internal rather than an external interest. We claim indeed affinity. There are persons who do deeds of kindness without realizing that they are being prompted by any specially high motive, and these deeds have been claimed by Christ as done in His name. For the Incarnation is an influence, not a mere example, and it may act, and does act, without always proclaiming its power. Christianity is a power in the world for good, which we cannot always trace openly to its source, but which is explained by the Incarnation. We believe in the influence of the Holy Spirit, the Life-giver, and we believe that He was sent into the world by the Word of God. This Divine intervention is a part of Christ's coming: we trace it to the Incarnation. So that continually the Incarnation determines our practice, and remains not a mere doctrine but a factor of activity, true to its life-giving character, effective in action, practical not theoretical, decisive in the world of reality, where the ideas that rule issue in facts.

No doubt the contemplation of the Incarnation would bring out more fully the value that it has as a doctrine, but its essential value is in human nature and in the reconstruction that it has actually achieved. The contemplation of it reminds us of our privilege, the possession of a clearer likeness to God. And, if

contemplation implies closer intercourse, and presence includes hearing as well as sight, then the voice that speaks from the presence of the Incarnation takes the expression of the command " Go and do thou likewise."

CHAPTER XII

THE INCARNATION AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Jewish conception of the Messiah differed from the realization of the Messianic idea presented by our Lord, and it is interesting to consider how far that was justified by the indications given in the Old Testament. That the prophets did nurse the expectation of a Saviour of the nation is undoubted, but it is equally clear that the terms in which they stated their message varied. At one time it is a special remnant that is to save the nation, and then again that is narrowed down to a single personality. And the question is whether in that personality can be traced such a combination of Divine and human qualities as will justify us in constituting it a foreshadowing of the Incarnation.

With all their anthropomorphism the Jews kept their idea of God quite free from any human admixture. They might describe Him in human terms, but they knew very well that He was far above them. So particular were they that they would not even write His name clearly. He intervened in human affairs, He talked with men, He shewed Himself in some form that they could see, He was subject to human moods and passions, and yet it was impossible to confuse Him with man. At one time they limited the sphere of His influence and localized His worship, till at last the history of the world as it broke in upon their experience expanded their conception of a tribal God into the realization of a world-God, who held not their nation only but all the nations in the hollow of His hand. This increased the

distance between God and man and made any mental combination even more impossible. And yet Isaiah speaks of a deliverer, born of human stock, who should receive the name of Mighty God. But he seems to be applying Divine terms to a human being, to emphasize his human dignity, to be characterizing an earthly ruler. In the second Isaiah, however, we get the character of the suffering Servant. Here is introduced an essential characteristic of Christ, so that the description suggests a portrait, and the portrait suggests the Incarnation. What is behind suffering, what is its moral value? Is it a punishment, or a training, or a testing? Is it to prove the reality of worth? By the Incarnation Christ was able to uplift humanity from within. He brought His Divinity to bear upon humanity to bring out its real worth. The suffering Servant is the instrument of God, "the purpose of the Lord by His hand should prosper," by Him character is tested. He does a real work for humanity, he does it under the guidance of God.

There is a wide difference between an instrument of God's working and a vehicle of God's presence, as there is also some difference between the uplifting of a nation and the uplifting of the world. But in each case the uplifting has a general purpose, a general effect. It is not an individual process. So far we see a foreshadowing of the Incarnation, we are prepared for the uplifting of humanity. The lamb led to the slaughter suggests the victim and the sacrifice, even if the idea is directly taken from the Passover celebration: the path to success lies through suffering, and the aim is unselfish. If the idea actually gave rise to the title applied to Christ, "the Lamb of God," there is some community of condition that supports the connexion of thought.

No doubt there is a tendency to read back New Testament meaning into Old Testament ideas. There is a danger of exaggerating the hold of a prophet upon the future. It is indeed his function to read

the present, to explain the signs of his times, but, if the present does bear some relation to the future, his open mind will anticipate what is to come. He will see and know more than meets the ordinary eye. One thing he certainly did understand, the intervention of God in the events of the world. That is emphatically the action of God behind humanity. That, it must be acknowledged, is not actually His action within humanity. But at least it prepares for the more intimate relation. God is not looking on and seeing men act, He is waiting for them to act, He is prompting them to act. The idea of the Incarnation is to a certain extent foreshadowed, in the Old Testament, in the conception of a chosen nation which not only presents the idea of God to the world but actually contains God's presence. The nation acts for God amongst the other nations of the world, which see in it God acting. Now the second Isaiah's presentation of the suffering Servant concentrates this phenomenon in one person, and so far we have two conditions of the Incarnation, the idea of immanence and the idea of personality. But further than this we cannot go. There is no actual union of God with man, though there is the combination of Divine working with human instrumentality. But there is the other presentation of the Divine king, who is indeed human, but draws his characteristics from God. And in the suffering Servant the quality of suffering, which is indeed possible in man, is at least upheld by Divine power. This character has a Divine commission, he suffers and dies for the people of God. And he has not himself deserved to suffer, "yet the Lord had purposed to bruise Him."

The principle of redemption is concentration. Whether it be centred in that nation which specially maintained the idea of God's presence, or centred in one person who maintained the same idea, it is the principle of immanence that is upheld. It was impossible for the genius of the Jewish nation to conceive of an individual presentation of the idea. And

indeed the same reluctance to limitation appears in the conception of the Christian Church. That, like the Jewish nation, is the receptacle of God's influence and the instrument of its development. Our commonwealth is in heaven. We belong to a society that is energized by God. We share in the privileges of our society, and, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.

It is true that the Incarnation is effected in one personality, but it is also true that in that personality all humanity is included. Humanity is traced back to Adam, but it is traced forward to Jesus Christ. The portrait of the suffering Servant maintains the idea of the solidarity of humanity, in so far as the Jewish prophet brings both Jews and Gentiles within the sphere of his influence. It was not at once that the early Christian Church recognized the wideness of God's sphere of action. Not without controversy was it decided that God was appealing in Christ to the whole world.

The monotheism of the Jews did not admit of their forming a conception of the principle of the Incarnation. But at least their monotheism saved them from Pantheism. Divine immanence might take the Pantheistic form, if it were not limited by the conception of a Divine personality in which it might be located. The relation of the Father to the Son presents the possibility and the credibility of a personal centre of Divine immanence. It provides the foundation of the manifestation of the principle of love. The Jews attached qualities to their idea of God, they did not simply regard Him as the Absolute. But the quality of mercy does not reach the high standard of the quality of love. And it is only through love that Divinity can approach humanity. Now it may be said that a suffering Servant does present the quality of love, because self-sacrifice implies love. But the Incarnation implies a double manifestation of love, and we Christians see in it the love of the Son as well as the love of the Father. In

the conception of the second Isaiah we see the principle of subjection, and that predominates. In the conception of the Incarnate Word love predominates over subjection, because it originates subjection.

Thus the monotheism of the Jews, while it makes the Incarnation possible to us, in our hold on monotheism, did not allow them to apply the principle of love to their conception of God. The love of God to man was, to them, a quality manifested in His relation to man, but not arising out of the quality actually exercised within the nature of God. Why should He love man? He might love man because He had created him, but that would be an external rather than an internal quality. There was no proof, otherwise, of God's possessing the quality of love. But in our view of God there is such a proof. He manifests it within Himself and so He shews that it is a quality of His own, apart from us. The Jews had the idea of the jealousy of God, which is a form of self-assertion. No one might trespass on His domain. But what if He went outside His own domain Himself? That did not enter into their conception. The two domains, the Divine and the human, were separate to them. One was Divine, the other human, and that was final. We see this limitation in the attitude of the Jews to Christ, which S. John so clearly describes. The Gentiles might ask, in the second Isaiah, "Who hath believed our report?" and the answer came quite clearly in their reception of Christ, no genuine Jew. And yet, in the confession of Caiaphas, we see the recognition of the claims of suffering. One man was to die for the people, and indeed for the whole world. But what about the personality of that required sufferer? Those who accepted an animal victim in their idea of sacrifice for sin were not likely to conceive the idea of a Divine victim. It repelled them, and they scorned the notion of the Divinity of Christ. God was God, and man was man: to confuse the two was blasphemy.

Our answer is that the two are not confused, but combined. But that the difficulty would ever be got over, though it is suggested in the Old Testament, is not there assured. We look back and we read our Old Testament in the light of the New, and we see the difficulty but we can understand it. We can understand how the obstacle could be removed, because we believe that it has been removed. We face the fact. But then we have a wider conception of humanity. We lay more stress on man's likeness to God, though we have got the idea from the Jewish religion. But still to-day there is some misconception. The idea of the anger of God, though we acknowledge the predominance of love in the Incarnation, still attaches itself to the Atonement. The correction is to fall back upon the Incarnation, to connect the Atonement with that. The Jews recognized the need of an Atonement, but they limited themselves by their impenetrability to the idea of an Incarnation. They learned to recognize God's intervention in the history of the world, and they saw His presence in the domain of Nature. They understood that His presentation of Himself was partly governed by His environment, He Who was a cloud by day might be a pillar of fire by night. He was a God of hosts in the sphere of the stars, and He was also a God of hosts in their conflicts with their enemies. But they did not extend His environment to the apparently alien sphere of humanity, alien in its characteristics, however akin in its desires. It was reserved for individual souls to perceive the possibility (and the desirability) of a combination of the spheres. To combine the spheres meant to combine the natures, so that the environment provided a combination of the natures. The worship at Jerusalem gave place to the worship in the heart.

The religion of the Jews was a spiritual religion. To them we owe the idea that God breathed life into man and so made him a living soul. To them we owe the idea that it is false to represent Him in any

material form, because He is by His very nature distinct from all that is material. And so they paved the way for the recognition of the danger that besets the contemplation of God in human form. But there is a spiritual view of man as well as a material view. The idealism of the prophets stands over against the materialism of the priests, and their very refusal to acknowledge the efficacy of sacrifice takes a higher value from the high moral value which they assigned to the principle of suffering. And so the suffering servant of the second Isaiah is a not inappropriate conception of the method that God would one day adopt in His regeneration of human nature. How the principle would be applied was not declared : it might be surmised, but it was not expressed. That Christ accepted the character sketched in the Old Testament implies that it contained some indication of the truth.

CHAPTER XIII

THE REGENERATION OF HUMANITY BY THE INCARNATION

It is important to realize that the condescension of God issues in the elevation of man, that it works from below as well as from above. The idea of regeneration is presented both by S. John and by S. Paul. In the conversation with Nicodemus our Lord insists on the need of a new birth, a spiritual birth which is from above. Whether it is pressing the meaning of ἄνωθεν to interpret it in the sense of a heavenly origin may be questioned, but at least it is clear that the birth declared to be necessary is of a higher kind than the ordinary human birth. It is different in character, different in intention. It qualifies for entrance into the kingdom of God. It is spiritual, not material. Its character is recognized by intuition, not by actual perception. It is inferred, not seen. At the same time it is described in material as well as in spiritual terms, for it is of water and spirit.

Another revelation of God is made by Jesus in S. John's Gospel to the Samaritan woman. She is taught not to localize God, because He is Spirit: the place of His worship does not matter so much as the method.

These two scenes emphasize the connexion between the nature of God and the nature of man, and define the ground on which an affinity can be established. But, when the affinity is established, how is its end to be worked out? The relation of man to God is a relation of the lower to the higher, and it is the lower

that gains. They do not combine on even terms. The power of God is introduced into the capacity of man, and so his capacity is increased. This power is life. The result is growth, which is an indication of life.

Regeneration is new birth. It is a general process, induced in individual cases, but dependent on their connexion with humanity. The Incarnation is not applied to individual cases, but it is of general influence. As taking place in Christ, it is a solitary fact, but, as involving humanity, it is a general fact. It might have been possible so to isolate individuals as to influence them separately, each by himself. And indeed each for himself is born again. This is irrespective of others, but it is shared with others, and it is an individual application of a general fact. Often regeneration is regarded as wholly spiritual, yet in His description of it our Lord includes the material as well as the spiritual. It is to be remembered that humanity touches both sides. And this was shown to us in our Lord's treatment of human beings, particularly in His acts of healing. As a rule, He communicated the gift of sight, of hearing, of speech by actual touch. And He would combine the restoration of the body with the relief of the spirit in a paralyzed man by forgiving his sins as well as enabling him to walk. So that we may expect the new birth, of which He speaks, to be comprehensive, affecting the whole nature of man.

Now the Incarnation in itself implies a strong consideration of human physical nature. For it was flesh that the Word became. If it was through flesh that God approached humanity, it will not be apart from the flesh that man approaches God. He will bring to God the whole of the humanity which Christ assumed for him. For our Lord assumes that in its entirety, and in its entirety man must make his return.

There is a human participation in the regenerating process. As a miracle requires faith in the object,

so regeneration involves the consent of the object. It is true that the ground is prepared by our Lord's own act, and that we are disposed towards the new birth by what He has done for us and in us. But the disposition of humanity requires obedience and devotion to bring it to completion, and obedience and devotion are manifestations of love. Love exacts love, love produces love.

Now in the human character there is naturally a conflict between the flesh and the spirit, and it might be questioned whether this conflict does not limit the influence of God upon man to that side of human nature which is nearer to God. Here again we are reminded that the Word became flesh. Here again we are reminded that the new birth is of water and of the spirit. The conflict is between two opposing forces, but the vanquished is not crushed out of existence by the victor, even when the worthier prevails. This gives reasonableness to the claim which is made by God upon the material side of our nature, the claim that it shall be included in our devotion to Him, in the new birth. The Word did not become merely human spirit, but human flesh, He assumed humanity to the uttermost, and the influence of God ever penetrates to the uttermost part of a man. It makes him respond to the full appeal made to him, and it will not allow itself to be curtailed in any part of its action in the regenerating process which is essential for entrance into the kingdom of God.

The characteristic of life which S. John claims for the Word naturally enters largely into the regeneration of humanity. Regeneration is not the beginning of a process, but a development, an elevation to a higher grade, a continuation of what is already begun. But it is a difference in degree, not in kind. The life is there, but its tone is raised. We say that baptism produces it, but it would be more correct to say that baptism stimulates it. Baptism does not possess magical power, but it is a means of spiritual

influence, an influence exerted on a human being who has already a personality of Divine affinity, and does not lose that personality for the change that comes over him. Indeed, considering infant baptism, we are bound to admit the potentiality rather than the actuality of the growth. The new birth is the stimulation of innate energy which is thus enabled to bear fuller fruit, but is at present in germ. It determines life in a fresh direction, bringing it more closely within the Divine influence. It is a reinvigoration of the personality on both its sides, physical and spiritual, and its main connexion with the Incarnation is found in the relation of the Incarnation to humanity and in consequence to personality.

Now it has already been argued that the Incarnation brings humanity in touch with Divinity through the influence of Christ's personality on the human race, a quickening influence, an increased faculty of life. While this influence is in the first instance general, it is in the second place individual. But it is searching and comprehensive. S. Paul calls the process putting off the old man and putting on the new man, and we may suppose that he has in view a later stage than the one indicated by our Lord to Nicodemus, into which the personal activity enters more fully than it can do at the initial stage. He contrasts the interests which occupy the attention at these two stages, in the one case temporal, in the other eternal : in the one case visible, in the other invisible. The activity which deals with them is, he says, the Spirit of God, which we receive as a pledge of God's intervention in us. But even so the groundwork is life, entering as a principle into all human activity, directing it, inspiring it, sanctifying it. It is life as the basis of physical and spiritual activity. Under this influence the new man, the reconstructed humanity, is renewed day by day. This is not a one-sided development, although S. Paul associates it with a possible decay of physical powers. For even in decay the physical nature retains some

of its original insistence, and may even make stronger demands upon personal self-control.

Regeneration is the constitution of a higher authority within the sphere of human activity. It follows the lines of the Incarnation, in that it is the means by which the relation of God to man is applied as the ruling factor in human improvement. Regeneration is the application of the principle of the Incarnation. Life is old in time, dating back for man to the Creation, and receiving a new accession of force at the Incarnation. But for each personality there is a time when life is new, and at that time the direct effect of the Incarnation is felt in the personality. There is no destruction of identity, but a redirection of the conscious self, so that it is able to determine itself to fresh advantage. It is able, in fact, to practise the Incarnation.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SACRAMENTS AND THE INCARNATION

The Church of England recognizes two Sacraments as specially ordained by Christ. We do not say that these are the only Sacraments, for He certainly recognized other means of grace, but we claim that Baptism and the Eucharist were actually appointed by Him as necessary means of grace. Baptism was already in existence, but He gave it a new value and a new meaning. The place taken by parables in His teaching illustrates the place taken by Sacraments in Christian acts of worship, for they bring out the meaning of Divine teaching, they are the pictures of religious reality. Now the Incarnation is best realized when it is practised, for then it is seen to be more than a doctrine, then it enters into life, or rather it asserts its power of life. For the Incarnation is itself sacramental, it contains an inherent truth which has been made visible. It is a parable of life, shewing that the idea of the relation between God and man is a fact, shewing also how man is related to God.

How can we say that the Sacraments bring out the meaning of the Incarnation? In Baptism man is brought nearer to God—that is his new birth. He is made a child of God. By the Incarnation he has the life already in him: it is developed by his acceptance, so that he becomes what potentially he already is, a child of God. In Baptism we see this acceptance, dependent on belief in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, the baptized person being admitted

into the Divine life. Our Lord regarded baptism, He instituted baptism, as the necessary means of entrance into the Christian Church. He evidently regarded it as a means of grace, and without it, He said, life was incomplete. It was the symbol of a process, just as the Incarnation was the symbol of a process. It conveyed grace, just as the Incarnation conveyed grace. It also acted as a preventive against sin. By the ordinary birth the tendency to sin is transmitted to human nature, on the principle of heredity, which applies to the spiritual as to the physical side of personality. For the Pelagian doctrine does not get rid of the hereditary principle by ignoring it. The Incarnation is itself a preventive against sin. They both act by their elevating power, the power of infusion. But Baptism rests on the basis of the Incarnation. Without it Baptism would become a mere rite, because the connecting link between God and man would be wanting. The transcendence of God would keep man apart from God, from the inward influence of God. Baptism would be a pledge of God's external influence, whereas it is now a sign of God's immanence.

And the connexion with the Eucharist is even closer. For there we have the actual presence of Christ. His personality is expressed in His body and blood, and the relation of His personality to ours is symbolized by the bread and wine. He did not say, "These are like My body and blood," but He said, "These are My body and blood." And to us they are what He said that they are. They are life to us: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves." It is the mystic conveyance of life that takes place in this Sacrament, it is life that it presents and conveys. And what is it but life that is presented and conveyed in the Incarnation? Divine life combined with human life, Divine life infused into human life. But the Body and the Blood emphasize the physical, the human idea. Not that humanity is purely physical,

far from it, but the transformation of humanity takes hold of the physical side as expressive of humanity, and the Word is not said to have become human spirit, but flesh. It is as though our Lord wished to impress on us the fact that He has entered into our ordinary life. It is as though He wished us to avoid the mistake of separating religion from ordinary life, so that it is regarded as an additional interest rather than a revaluation of all the interests of life. For the Incarnation is an elevation of values, a new standardization of values. It makes us regard all things from a higher point of view, because it has actually set them on a higher grade. It is a declaration of the sacramental view of life. It draws out the inner meaning of things and persons, it is a revelation of reality. And so our Lord said, not "I shew you reality," but "I am Reality." To those who believe this the Incarnation is a realization of reality. The ideal becomes to them, not merely the possible, but the actual. Without it the presence of God would have indeed passed into humanity, but with it we become personally identified with the process. The Incarnation is the identification of God with humanity, the Eucharist is our self-identification with God. It is not a deification of self, but a canonization of self. It is regeneration passing into sanctification, for, the veil between the material and the spiritual being torn down, we enter by it into the Holy of Holies. We give praise to the Holiest in the height, we worship the Holiest.

And let us remember that, as in the Incarnation there is an offering of God to us, so in the Eucharist there is an offering of ourselves to God. Often there is a tendency, even a desire, to obscure the idea of sacrifice, but that is equivalent to obscuring the idea of sacrifice in the Incarnation. It is as though the Epistle to the Hebrews had never been written, as though Christ were not really our High Priest. Strange that the remembrance of the Cross should not recall the idea of sacrifice, which is so intimately

bound up in the life and death of Christ. Symbolism is not a substitute for reality, it is a declaration of reality. The Sacraments do not take the place of the facts which they present, but they convey the meaning, the force, the efficacy of the facts. They are not what they shew, but they are the revelation of what they shew. They represent their background. Behind the meaning of the Incarnation lies the Christ who is its product, the Christ of reality rather than of doctrine, the Christ of life rather than of belief. The Sacraments are the channels of life, of communicated life, which not only shew that we live, but are actual developments of life. Religion is not the act of fixing our minds on God, not the assurance that we belong to God, but the mystic union of ourselves with God, the translation of belief into actuality, the worship that is practical because it is spiritual, that is spiritual because the spiritual sphere is the practical sphere as well. By that union we do fix our minds on God, because we feel that He is with us and we are with Him : and this is our assurance—our mystical union with Him being felt and enjoyed. It is said that the great things of the world take place in the intellect, but it would be truer to say that they take place in the spirit, for that is the sphere of our intercourse with God, and the great things are great only in their relation to Him.

Thus life is seen to be sacramental, thus the meaning of life is brought out, depending not on time or space, but on its relation to God. Time and space are limiting conditions, whereby both things and persons are presented to us, but they are only relative, and the relative is only a presentation of the absolute. The Incarnation has brought the absolute within our range of vision and our scope of activity, and it is really independent of time and space. Still it acts in them, and concerns our human and material relations, while it draws them into our new relation to God. For the Incarnation is the presentation of

a great principle that time has a sacramental value as the revelation of eternity, and that space has a sacramental value as the revelation of God's immanence. Through it we see the sacramental meaning of life, which is not a series of acts determined by feelings and thoughts, but a principle which includes acts and feelings and thoughts within the nature of God. Humanity drawn into the sphere of God's nature becomes more Divine, it becomes the medium through which God bestows Divine life, it becomes thus possessed of Divine life.

The sacramental or symbolical method of bestowing life is brought out by the use of ordinary acts to signify extraordinary influence. By washing and eating we receive and we express the activity of God. Thus we are able to connect our activity with His. These single acts are part of our regular life and are enlisted in the service of our spiritual life. This connects spiritual with physical life, but it also widens the meaning of physical life. We are taught to find a spiritual meaning in that. The tendency is to separate the two, and thus the sacramental idea is a corrective of the idea that life can possibly be divided.

It is interesting to investigate the origin of the sacramental idea. We find it in primitive religions, which exhibit the phenomenon of the sacramental meal. It takes the form of worship, but the idea of worship is combined with the idea of communion between the worshipper and his God. This again is combined with the social idea, a bond between the worshippers themselves. There is also the idea of sacrifice : it is an offering to God, either by way of purification or by way of expiation. But the approach of the worshippers to their God is direct, there is no intermediary priest. All these elements appear in the Christian sacraments, unless exception be taken to the last element. But even there it might be argued that the whole body of worshippers is of a priestly character, and they only have a

representative to make their offering. But we see that an important element is present, the idea of fellowship, which probably was more fully emphasized in the original intention of the Sacraments. For Baptism is described as a process *into* the *name* of the Trinity, and that carries with it an important implication. The name of the Trinity is all that the word God implies, it is the nature and qualities of God. And to be baptized *into* His name is to be brought within the sphere of the society in which His presence is active. Thus we see the social character of Baptism, and distinguish it from a purely individual process. The social character of the Eucharist is still more evident. It is essentially connected with a number of persons, it is a collective rite. It is not a solitary meal, as the method of its original institution shows. And this reflects the method of the Incarnation, the elevation of humanity at large.

There is no need to point out the purificatory intention of Baptism, but the expiatory intention of the Eucharist it is also not difficult to detect. Any process of keeping the death of Christ in remembrance must include that intention. Nor would any one need to be reminded of the act of worship implied in both Sacraments, especially in the Eucharist. It is the highest object of worship that we invoke in Baptism, and it is to the highest object of worship that we offer ourselves in the Eucharist.

The presence of the priest may be considered by some as an addition to the practice of primitive religion, but that partly depends on our view of his position. If the whole religious society, in its relation to God, has a priestly character and takes a priestly attitude, then the presence of the priest is only a concentration of the general attitude to God presented by the whole body of worshippers. He is acting for them, not for himself. It has been pointed out that S. Paul, in his enumeration of religious offices, makes no mention of the priesthood, which

implies that the office of the clergy is rather prophetic than sacerdotal.

But in any case the fact that emerges is that Christianity, in its sacramental system, is following the lines of primitive religions. And surely the originality of Christ consists, not in His inventive, but in His developing, power. He does not set Himself to produce what is new, but rather to give freshness to what is old. He did not, for example, create a new humanity, but He revived the old humanity, put new life into it, started it on fresh lines. That was His authority, that was His originality. It would not have occurred to anyone, who wished to found a new religion, so to transform ancient practices as to give them a new significance. Such a person would have failed to see anything but the outward sign. But our Lord opened human eyes to learn to see. He taught His followers to see with the understanding, which is to expose the sacramental character of life. We come back to the Incarnation to account for it, we see in that the first indication of the sacramental idea. We have not conceived the Incarnation aright till we have seen in it the proof of our mystic union with God, till we have let it teach us that in many ways and in many portions He has all along been proving this great fact, of which He has given to the world this last convincing proof.

The sacramental idea treats humanity as a whole. It takes a broad view of the working of Nature and of the activity of human life, and it recognizes that they belong to a scheme. In furtherance of the scheme, not to interrupt it, but to perfect it, the Incarnation was added as God's intervention in His own scheme. So He recognized the interpretative power of man and encouraged his use of it. For the sacramental system calls in the aid of interpretation to religion, and bids religious men learn to see. All that belongs to humanity throws a light on the character of humanity, and, when the Divine light is thrown upon humanity, by the way of absorbing

human life within itself, that enlightening power of humanity receives fresh power. In the Incarnation humanity is enlightened as well as enlivened. The life that it gives is also light, the light of men. The darkness of things seen does not overwhelm the light of things unseen, but the light that is within enlightens the darkness that is without. This is the light of the Sacraments, which they take from the Incarnation principle, and it shews us that neither life nor religion is superficial, but that the influence of God extends over all things, so that what is called secular belongs to the religious sphere. For the Incarnation touches the whole of humanity.

CHAPTER XV

MIRACLES AND THE INCARNATION

The miracles of Christ are described in S. John's Gospel as signs—manifestations of His power. It is not their wonderful character that he brings out so much as their symbolic character. They are proofs of Christ's nature, and therefore they are calculated to carry conviction, but they do not astonish so much as confirm. But they are sometimes condemned as improbable, if not impossible, instances of God's intervention. Now, when it is once granted that the control of the world, the control of Nature, is in God's hands, it is not difficult to explain miracles, without explaining them away. It has been urged in defence of miracles that a man of great genius would be likely to have a definite scheme of managing his affairs, and at the same time might on a special occasion depart from his scheme and then in the ordinary course return to it again. This would be no proof that he had no scheme, and there would be no ground for calling his departure from it in question. Similarly we may suppose that God has a scheme for the world and for Nature, and yet may on occasion depart from it. He may have the will, and presumably He has the power, for after all He was never tied down to any particular scheme.

Now our Lord in His miracles never runs absolutely counter to God's usual course. Human skill has done wonders in the restoration of sight and hearing and speech, and a Divine Person would *ex hypothesi* have higher than human powers in these directions. But the restoration of the dead to life

seems to stand on a different footing from these acts of healing. To cast out devils might be paralleled by cures of lunacy, but there is no parallel in human experience to raising the dead. On the other hand, we do not fully understand the origin and the mystery of life. But we do know the wonderful hold of God upon human life. Its very transmission is really a miracle, which we cannot explain, and yet it is of daily and hourly and momentary occurrence. We cannot dictate methods to the Lord of life.

If we bring the Incarnation to bear upon the question, we may be told that that is rather a spiritual than a physical fact. But it is partly a physical fact that the Word became flesh. The influence of mind upon matter takes strange forms, and we know still less about the influence of spirit.

Those, however, who acknowledge the Incarnation as a fact look for signs of its influence. They are quite sure that it has changed, not merely the face of religion, but the face of Nature. They do not consider only what it has done, but what it can do, what it is calculated to do if no obstacles are opposed to its influence. And they consider the obstacles which can be raised, and are raised, by human free-will. Thus they look at the potentiality of the Incarnation. It may be said that the Incarnation is itself a miracle, and that we are begging the question of miracles when we bring forward the Incarnation in support of miracles. But in arguing any question we have to start with some premiss, and Theism itself has to assume God as its premiss. Christianity is an actual phenomenon, and no other premiss but the Incarnation accounts for it. The Incarnation has been put forward, and seems to us a reasonable explanation. We should not have imagined it, but, when it is presented to us, we accept it. And so it is fair to bring it forward in support of miracles.

Assume the Incarnation, and you expect Christ to act in extraordinary ways. Grant that He pos-

sessed the power of life, and you expect Him to shew His power. Grant further that He rose from the dead Himself, and you are not surprised that He could raise others from the dead.

Now, if it is objected that the Resurrection is itself unthinkable, we turn to the question of evidence, and we do not believe that so many witnesses could be misled. They were not really prepared for it, so that it presented itself to them as something strange. Therefore they would not have accepted it, unless they had been convinced of it as a fact. But the Resurrection, too, is credible in the light of the Incarnation. It is not within human experience, but neither is the Incarnation, and the Divine power of the one accounts for the Divine power of the other.

Some objectors have thought that they are upsetting the whole of Christianity by denying miracles. But in any case Christ is Himself a miracle, apart from His miracles. He attracts millions to Himself, it is His personality that accounts for His attraction. There is a wonderful description of this power of His, attributed to Napoleon, and quoted by Dr. Liddon: "I have inspired multitudes with such an enthusiastic devotion that they would have died for me, . . . but to do this it was necessary that I should be *visibly* present with the electric influence of my looks, of my words, of my voice. When I saw men and spoke to them, I lighted up the flame of self-devotion in their hearts. . . . Christ alone has succeeded in so raising the mind of man towards the Unseen, that it has become insensible to the barriers of time and space. Across a chasm of eighteen hundred years Jesus Christ makes a demand which is beyond all others difficult to satisfy: He asks for that which a philosopher may often seek in vain at the hands of his friends, or a father of his children, or a bride of her spouse, or a man of his brother. He asks for the human heart: He will have it entirely to Himself. He demands it unconditionally: and forthwith His demand is granted. Wonderful! In defiance of

time and space, the soul of man, with all its powers and faculties, becomes an annexation to the empire of Christ. All who sincerely believe in Him experience that remarkable supernatural love towards Him. This phenomenon is unaccountable : it is altogether beyond the scope of man's creative powers. Time, the great destroyer, is powerless to extinguish this sacred flame : time can neither exhaust its strength nor put a limit to its range. This it is which strikes me most : I have often thought of it. This it is which proves to me quite convincingly the Divinity of Jesus Christ " (*Bampton Lectures*, III., p. 148).

This may seem unlikely testimony from a mind which might have been supposed to work on quite a different track, but it is all the more overwhelming. The personality of Christ is its own evidence for its reality. What He does convinces us, because He does it. I read the story of His life, and His personality takes possession of mine. I read the story of His parables, and I bow before the Diviner of life. I read the story of His miracles, and I bow before the great Healer. I read the story of men raised from the dead, and I bow before the Prince of Life. I read the story of the Resurrection, and I bow before the Life. But His personality takes me back to the Incarnation, and I recognize the possibilities of my own personality. Nature has poured forth her store of wonders, and miracles are no longer incredible. For life is a continual sacrament, and all that happens in it is explained.

Miracles, says S. John, are manifestations of the glory of the Incarnate Word. He Who became flesh had power in the sphere of humanity. He entered the realm of Nature, in which was already life, and there, in His own domain, life stood out with added clearness. Humanity may have been less responsive than the inanimate world, but those who did give their answer gave it more effectively. To them He allowed the power to become children of God, giving of His own to His own, and making them more His

own. His influence over them is explained by what He was as well as by what He became. That, at any rate, nothing will explain away. But, as to miracles, let us take them as proofs of God's intervention in Nature and humanity, proofs which we accept because we believe in the intervention.

But, says the objector, why have miracles ceased? According to the Roman Church, they have not ceased, but its miracles are not universally accepted. One answer to the objection would be that we are living under the influence of the Incarnation, but not in its age. What God might choose to do in direct support of the work of His Son, He might not choose to do after the Ascension. Another answer is that one condition of a miracle is faith. Is our faith sufficient to call forth a miracle? Or does it need a miracle for its support? For a third answer is that Christ has now passed into human experience, and that with the experience that we have or ought to have the persuasion of a miracle would be weak beside the persuasiveness of that subjective experience. We have the Sacraments as signs of God's presence. They *are* a miracle, and we need no further signs. But there is a fourth answer. The Incarnation was an entrance into the world of Nature and into the world of humanity. Since this intervention, humanity itself has penetrated more deeply in the world of Nature. It has wrested from Nature more of her secrets, and with its added knowledge has gained more power. Thus what might have been taken as a miracle before may now be viewed as part of Nature's system. What is now possible to surgery or medicine was impossible before. We have also gained a deeper insight into the influence of mind upon matter. And this insight has induced more power.

On the whole, then, there is less reason to expect or require miracles to-day, while at the same time miracles in no way discredit the Gospel records. The Evangelists shew no trace of special pleading,

they tell a plain, straightforward story. They claim to tell the truth, and no one has any right to urge miracles as discrediting their claim. Their differences substantiate their combined claim. Destructive analysis is always dangerous, because it depends on a false principle of emphasis. It is on the objectors to miracles that the *onus probandi* rests, and indeed they would be hard put to it if they had to prove their own existence.

The real question is whether the personality of Christ is of such a nature as to attract our belief by its own persuasive power. We maintain that it is, because our belief depends in the last resort on the reality of that personality. He is so real that we believe in His Incarnation. We do not confuse it with other instances of incarnation provided by primitive religions, though that is not the same thing as to deny all foreshadowing of the one great fact. From the beginning there has been intercourse between God and man, and the Incarnation is not a cataclysm but a reconstruction of original humanity. What man has become God prepared him to be.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PARABLES AND THE INCARNATION

There is a very interesting phenomenon in the parables of Christ, and that is the personal form in which they are so often cast. These are stories drawn from common life to illustrate the depth of life's meaning. Life speaks its meaning, but it is not easy to hear its voice, to understand its language. A parable is, strictly speaking, a comparison. The phenomena of two universes of experience are put side by side, that the one set of phenomena may bring out the meaning of the other. And thus the two universes are seen to be in relation to one another. In other words the comparison is between the material world and the spiritual world. But the comparison is not made for purposes of contrast, but on the ground of similarity. The underlying principle of both is life, which binds both together, and constitutes their similarity and their mutual relation.

Now this principle of life is the foundation of the Incarnation, taking the form of an inter-relation. It is thus a correlating principle and accounts for the possibility of a union between man and God. It sets up the actuality of the union, it makes the union effective.

Many of the parables are descriptions of the kingdom of heaven, in its inclusiveness, its value, its discriminating quality, its persuasiveness. But it is not simply as a society that it is considered, for it is distinctly compared to a person. If anything could clench the intention of the Christian religion, it would be this characteristic of the parables, that

they compare the kingdom of heaven to a *man*, who does this or that. And that calls attention to the principle of life that is enunciated in Christianity, the idea of personality. God is not a force, He is a personal activity, He is a Person in activity. When He comes into contact with humanity, even in a society, He stamps His character upon it, He expresses Himself within it as a personality. That is His communication of living power, that is His communication of life.

The Incarnation is itself a parable of life. It tells the story that God is not at one pole of existence and man at the other, but that they are both placed together in a wonderful union, which brings out, not the contrast between them, but their likeness. And it teaches the lesson that the likeness is to be drawn out, developed, realized. This is the parable : the union of apparent opposites dissipates the imagined contrast.

In the parables the dealings of God with man are sketched. God is the sower, man is the soil in which He sows. God is the owner of the field which contains wheat and tares, He is also the reaper, who will separate the one from the other, good from evil, when the time for determining man's relation to good and evil arrives. God is the bridegroom, whom the wise and foolish virgins wait to honour. God is the Good Samaritan, who binds up the wounds of suffering humanity. It is a mistake to suppose Him indifferent to men's cares and pleasures, their feelings and desires : He puts them in charge of duties, as a master gives talents or pounds for his servants' use ; He provides them with happiness, as a king invites guests to a feast ; He allows them to go their own way, and then welcomes them back to His love, as a father recovers and restores an erring son.

In the Incarnation God has the same regard for the weakness and the happiness of humanity. He allows it intercourse with Himself, He blesses it against its own wilful resistance. He judges it by

raising its standard, to which now it will be both easier and harder to rise. He holds the position of authority, but He accommodates that to the possibilities of obedience. He does not depreciate the value of spiritual life, but He sets it in fuller relief while He makes it more attainable.

On one side of it the Incarnation is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Its environment is human, its application is Divine. It is a cure for humanity, a cure of an apparently ordinary character, but extraordinarily applied. It is a natural medicine for spiritual disease. But the patient needs faith, a personal, living faith. For the Incarnation deals with personality and life. It is two-sided, and on each of its sides stand both personality and life.

In wireless telegraphy there is no visible connexion between the two stations, but each station is a centre of activity. The messages that passed between earth and heaven before the coming of Christ were carried as far as possible on visible lines. Man at any rate tried to imagine them visible, though he often failed. In the Incarnation there is less use of visibility, for the relation is more spiritual, less material. Still humanity is one factor, and its vehicle for the spirit remains material, however much the spiritual may be emphasized and developed.

The stories told in the parables are repeated from century to century, and day by day. But their meaning, the meaning of ordinary life, has been impressed into the facts that they reproduce and the ordinary life that they elevate. He who looks at the human life of Jesus sees the story, he who looks at the Divine life sees the meaning. It has been said that, if Nature is the story of life, history is the interpretation of the story. Parables describe common incidents in life, and these are pictures of life's underlying meaning. Common incidents are not trivial, because they have a meaning. They are not trivial in their general bearing on life. History un-

folds the meaning of what happens every day, it explains Nature. But the more serious side of history is its religious aspect, in which events are seen to be related to one another as unfolding the higher aspect of life, as parts of a scheme. That is the light that the Incarnation has thrown on human life as related to God. It is part of a scheme, God's scheme.

Our Lord Himself explained two of His parables, The Sower and The Tares. He showed that all the important details in the story contributed to its meaning. We miss the meaning of the Incarnation if we do not allow it to bear on all the factors in human life. It has explained these by dealing with them all. It has an inclusive influence, it has disregarded nothing. It would not have been able to exercise this influence, if the Son of God had become a man. It has this comprehensive influence, because the Son of God became man.

One purpose of our Lord's parabolic teaching is said to appear in the differentiating process which that form of teaching sets up. It serves as a test of character, because it separates those who understand from those who do not understand. It even develops the power of understanding, and makes dulness of understanding still more dull. We are to take understanding in a spiritual rather than an intellectual sense. Now the Incarnation appeals to the spiritual sense rather than to the intellectual, for it is above all in the spiritual world that the relation of man to God has full effect. And yet here the less important details have their value. For we see in the life of Christ that nothing is passed over. In His dealings with humanity He did not neglect even the hairs of the head. He has so raised life as to give every part of it its value, because it has a meaning. He has encouraged us to find out its meaning. As S. Peter learnt, He made nothing common. The Incarnation was penetrating as well as condescending, inclusive as well as considerate.

And the meaning of life that it has drawn out is this, that all things work together, that there is no break in the chain, that comparison means the relation of the actual to the real, that all experience is religious experience.

CHAPTER XVII

THE INCARNATION AND IMMORTALITY

It took men a long time to discover immortality. They had a dislike of finality; in the Old Testament there are traces of a desire of immortality, though there is not much feeling of confidence about it. Job seems to believe that apart from his flesh he will see God, and one Psalmist has an idea of a shadowy existence which with difficulty rises above the annihilation of the lower world of Sheol. It does not include the essential conception of life. It was reserved for the Incarnation to draw that idea direct from the essence of God. For no union between God and man could be firm and real unless it was founded on life, unless there was union of life in God with life in man.

In Plato the doctrine of immortality is combined with the doctrine of Transmigration, which limits the idea of individuality. He believes in the eternity of the soul, which he carries back into the past as well as forward into the future, and he supports his view of identity by his theory of Recollection. Apparently souls do not derive their life from the World-Soul, but exist parallel to that, on a similar principle of eternal existence.

But the Christian idea of immortality is bound up with the relation of the spirit to the body, to the extent of regarding the two as inseparable. S. Paul allows of a change in the body, which in the next life will receive immortality by passing through a process which ensures incorruptibility, and he does not limit future existence to the spirit. The body is

to become spiritual, but it is to persist. And this is borne out by his view of resurrection. He argues by analogy : Christ's Resurrection is a proof of ours ; if He has risen, we shall rise : if we shall not rise, He has not risen. The method is not a method of direct proof, it is a method of reasonableness.

The Incarnation does not prove immortality, but rather supports it. It explains, by elevating, human nature. Life is the opposite of death, the possession of life implies superiority over death. If an inherent faculty of life can be proved, that will constitute a safeguard against death. Now the Incarnation gave its clearest demonstration of its significance in the Resurrection. The Incarnation is a manifestation of sacrifice, and its most summary manifestation in this direction is the Cross, but the value of the Cross depends on the Resurrection. For the sacrifice included the Kenosis, the self-emptying of Christ, and the value of this self-emptying lay in the paradox which it involved, that Christ was really what He allowed Himself temporarily not to be. The Resurrection showed that He was what He did not parade Himself as being, although all along, as S. John shows, He could maintain, 'I am.' The principle of life inherent in the Incarnation emerges openly at the Resurrection. This principle is demonstrated therein on both sides, the human and the Divine, for the physical characteristics of Christ remain, as in the proof required by, and given to, the doubting Thomas, and the spiritual characteristics are implied by the command to Mary Magdalene, "Touch Me not."

It is not natural to regard the Incarnation as affecting merely the temporal condition of human nature. We are not justified in thinking it probable that it would be used as a means of ameliorating man's condition in the world and nothing else. That seems too limited an end for so great a condescension, and it is not altogether clear that it would have been the best method for securing such a result. Besides,

we should then have to revise our meaning of life and give it a different value. Even if we eliminate entirely from the term 'eternal life' the meaning of 'everlasting,' we are left with an inadequate explanation of the value of eternal life. Knowledge, according to S. John, is the important factor in eternal life, and we should then have to limit human knowledge of God and Christ to the space of a very few years.

Moreover, the influence of the Incarnation has been taken to be organic. It is not possible to regard it as merely external, for that again would be limiting its range. Besides, surely an external influence would die out unless it were constantly renewed, and the value of a constant renewal depends on the force of the original application. But, if it effected a definite and constitutional change in the character of the sphere on which it was exercised from the first, then all renewal would be a continuation of the original process and a continuity of influence would be maintained. It is continuity that counts, and this is the relation of the Incarnation to immortality. There are characteristics in human nature that imply continuity, and this is one of the arguments for immortality. A costly and beautiful vase deserves to last, but it contains in itself no inherent capacity for lasting that will preserve it against the blow of a hammer. But it is not so with life, for nothing can be produced that is essentially superior to life. Life is a force, rather than a state: death is a state, rather than a force.

In the Incarnation Christ exhibited and communicated the principle of life. He attached Himself, with His Divine essence, to something which contained germs of death, but even this was not proved to be incapable of retaining life. And certainly there was no sign of any weakening of the Divine essence: witness the Resurrection. The question is how far the communication was continuous, and that depends on the question of interpenetration. By supposition God is eternal, im-

mortal: what will be the effect of communicating an immortal essence to what may or may not be immortal? For we are supposing a permanent effect on humanity as the only possible purpose of the Incarnation.

Neither the Resurrection nor the Incarnation can be imagined as an act or a process confined to the Divine sphere. In the case of the Incarnation that would be absolutely contradictory, even if we limited the act or the process to a definite space of time. Each is the extension of the Divine sphere to the human. S. Paul does not argue for the Incarnation as he does for the Resurrection. Had he done so, it is to be supposed that he would have used a similar process of analogy and regarded the Incarnation as a pledge (ἀπαρχή) of human reconstruction. For, indeed, it is that, on all reasonable grounds. By the Incarnation we are dead unto sin, but alive unto God, in Christ Jesus. His life is efficacious, not simply because it was restored to Him, but because it was His essence. In Him we have life, because of His humanity.

The humanity of Christ is not an isolated phenomenon, but it belongs to our humanity. Humanity is not God, but God's creation. By taking humanity, the Son of God descends into His own creation. He came into His own. He reconstructed the whole world of Nature, including the nature of man, Nature's crowning production. We may call the Incarnation a miracle, but the testimony to it is personal experience. It is in its application to our life that it has its real value. Our Lord told His disciples that they were the light of the world and the salt of the earth, but it was He Who made them so, and they owed it to His personal influence. And so it is with the Incarnation. Situated in the sphere of life, it penetrates life by means of personality. The gift which, according to S. John, our Lord claims to have made to humanity is the gift of life. We cannot reasonably limit this to physical life, or even to a spiritual

life lasting for a short period. For he says that eternal life is the knowledge of God and of Christ. This knowledge has been deepened by the Incarnation. But it is a knowledge that enters into the character, it is not an external acquisition. For, if it were that, then the fact of the Incarnation would be for consideration, not for appropriation. The relation of the spirit to the body enters into this question as it enters into the question of immortality. Immortality is not merely longer life, but the potentiality of longer life.

The Incarnation is a constructive fact rather than an instructive fact. It does not simply teach us something about immortality, but it makes us more capable of immortality. In our own case we see the results of the predominance of the spirit over the body, and it is a similar predominance that is seen at work in an incarnate Christ. When S. John says that he wrote his Gospel that his readers might have life in the name of Jesus Christ, he bases this possession of life on belief. He implies that belief leads to the possession of life. But belief does not create that possession, it only aids the possession of an existing gift. So we are driven to consider the source of the gift. Do we find it in ourselves or in Christ? We find it in both, because Christ is the source, and we are in Christ. It is our intimate relation to Christ that locates life in us.

And so the Incarnation bears on immortality. Immortality is life writ large. The Incarnation is life. To put the position on lower ground, it would not have been worth while for the Word to become flesh merely in order to exalt human life for a limited space of time. Nor again would that view give a sufficiently real meaning to the idea of life. In our estimate of life we are constantly misled by its external characteristics. These are rather signs than realities, indications which may or may not be used as revelations. But it is not too much to say that the Incarnation is a revelation of life. The intense

sympathy shown by our Lord with the difficulties of human existence proves His appreciation of its lower and more ordinary side. But we find that even this touches the higher side as well. Else why does He so closely associate an act of healing with a declaration of forgiveness? There is nothing physical about penitence, and yet it is definitely attached to bodily recovery. If we extend this principle to the general application of the Incarnation, we justify and explain God's intervention in humanity. There we see amelioration working in the physical sphere by a method which goes beyond the physical sphere. We see the physical powers made the instruments of moral and spiritual influence. We see life treated on the larger side, and energized to its highest point. We see life defined. Without going outside its range, our Lord drew all things within the range of life. But He enlarged it, not merely in definition, but in fact. And, when we claim that immortality is included, we are not going beyond fair inference. "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life," He said, and, if that is true of His words, it expresses the meaning of His act. In Christ, spirit and life go together, and that is His definition of life.

One argument for immortality is based on the position held by purpose in determining the value of life. Every life is to be estimated by its purpose—What am I interested in, what do I set myself to carry out? Will my purpose be cut short by death? Is it reasonable that it should be so cut short? And the inference is that it will not. The Incarnation has given to each of us a higher purpose. It has also given us increased power of carrying out that purpose. For it has reinterpreted life for us. Life is not existing from hour to hour and from day to day, but it is taking each moment as expressive of life's whole purpose. The superiority of the spirit to the body, and the consequent reasonableness of the predominance of the spirit over the body, is the factor that determines the purpose. To serve God is to

reign. The object-lesson of Christ's life was not imported into a religion, but it took its meaning from its power, which was re-creative rather than instructive. Christ is the centre of the religion in His personality, and, according as we regard that, so is our view of immortality. God in us is our assurance of immortality. The life-giving principle, entering afresh into humanity created long before, established itself as the foundation of spiritual and physical life. It asserted the significance of either kind of life, but it summarized the value of the combination in terms of a balance regulating the relation of the one to the other. In immortality we have the assertion in man of the principle asserted in the Word become flesh. In each case there is a proportion, a suggestion of a sense of proportion. This sense is not felt by materialists or so-called spiritualists, because they exaggerate either one or other element of life.

It is sometimes objected to the Incarnation that it reproduces a fallacy already noticed in human speculation and only adds to the list of reported and reputed incarnations. The question is not whether there are other cases, but whether this is a real case. One answer to the objection is that it has proved its reality by its power. Clinging to Christ as their Lord of life, thousands have asserted their assurance of immortality. They have put their faith to the test of experience and their experience has borne out their faith. They have lived, as far as in them lay, the life which their religion lays down as the foundation of life. They have drawn from this combination of natures a deduction which has kept the characteristics of each nature in view. It is the combination of the eternity of God with the mortality of humanity. It is the assurance of the eternal influence of Divinity in working out human immortality.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE INCARNATION AND THE RESURRECTION

It is impossible to miss the connexion between the Incarnation and the Resurrection, if we acknowledge life to be the enabling spirit of each. When our Lord says that He came that His followers may have life abundantly, He lays strong stress on the living power of the Incarnation. And S. Paul lays similar stress on the living power of the Resurrection, when he describes our Lord as a life-giving Spirit. Each of these phenomena presupposes the human possession of life as the opportunity for the effecting of its purpose, each of them is calculated to develop an existing capacity.

S. Paul declares that our salvation is conditioned in Christ's life. The validity of His life is assured by His Resurrection. That is its final proof, confirmed indeed by the Ascension. He says that Christ has nullified death and illuminated life and immortality through the Gospel, and this we may attribute to the Resurrection. But the evidence for the Resurrection is material as well as spiritual evidence, as appears in the manifestation to Thomas of the wounds of Christ. Thus His humanity as well as His Divinity is included in His victory over death, and we are brought back to the Incarnation in considering the Resurrection.

The Resurrection is used by S. Paul as a means for teaching Christians that they are dead to sin and alive to God. It carries with it the lesson of life, it ensures to them life in their mortal existence. It is noticeable that S. John's Gospel emphasizes the

glorification of Christ in His death, the glorification rather than the suffering. Thus he connects the Incarnation with the Atonement. "I, if I be lifted up out of the earth, will draw all men to Myself." Although he relates this to Christ's death, he has more than His death in mind, for he has prefaced his account of the scene by these words of Christ: "The hour has come that the Son of man should be glorified." The glory of Christ is impressed upon us as belonging to Him before primeval time. His glory manifested to us rests in His essential life. That life is communicated to us in the Incarnation, it is conditioned in the Incarnation. We should not have known it, we could not have shared in it, it would not have been brought within our experience, without the Incarnation.

If, then, the Incarnation is the vehicle of life, and the Resurrection is the assurance and ratification of life, there is a close connexion between the two. They belong to one process, and they explain one another. But especially the Incarnation explains the Resurrection. The Resurrection of Christ is not a return to the original conditions, like the resurrection of Lazarus, but it is an extension of the original conditions. It preserves the personality of Christ, but presents it in a glorified form. In Christ life is a union of body and spirit, but also a union of humanity and Divinity. The body remains after the Resurrection, but the spirit is even more predominant than before. Humanity remains, but Divinity has a special predominance.

The fundamental condition of the Incarnation is life. This life illuminated humanity, but it also reconstructed humanity. The Resurrection is a reconstruction, because it is an assertion and a proof of the power of life. It asserts and establishes the power of life over death, so that life is not merely an activity but an effective influence. Life asserts itself, but it also contests the reality of its opposite. It is self-conscious, but it is also victorious, for it

nullifies that which is external to itself. Its action is offensive as well as defensive. The Resurrection has a characteristic common to it with the Incarnation, in that its influence is not merely external. We do not merely believe in the Resurrection of Christ, but we are confident that it carries with it our own resurrection. That is its power, an inclusive power. But, seeing that we have life in ourselves by our participation in the flesh and blood of Christ, we may regard this as an internal power. Life is the enabling condition. If we are in Christ, and Christ is in us, then, sharing His life, we share His Resurrection, an extended life. For the Resurrection is an extension of the Incarnation, and it is a manifestation of the development of life.

But the Resurrection was a manifestation of Jesus Christ in power. It was the assertion of His Sonship to God. S. Paul says that He was designated Son of God in power, according to the spirit of holiness, by (from) the resurrection of the dead (plural). And he is really emphasizing his statement by his very expression, when he says, not the resurrection from the dead (as he usually does), but the resurrection of the dead, that is of Jesus Christ counted among the dead and representing them. But the real emphasis is on ' power.' The Resurrection asserts the power of God and proves His power. It asserts the supremacy of Divinity over humanity in Jesus Christ's personality. It asserts the supremacy of Divinity over humanity in His relation to us. And this is supported by the expression ' the spirit of holiness,' which implies the holiness inherent in His spirit, which was Divine as well as human, Divine more than human. Thus the Resurrection is closely linked with the Incarnation; it is the designation or declaration of that Sonship of God which is so important a part of the Incarnation. Life is part of the power of God, it is part of the power conferred on us by the Incarnation, and the Resurrection declares the Sonship of God in power, and so strengthens the

life that is implanted in us. This power acts in our human spirit, which is in contact with the spirit of Christ, and so in contact with perfect holiness. The union of holiness and power is an essential factor in the Resurrection, as it is in the Incarnation. In rising from the dead our Lord shewed the spirit of holiness, showed that the human spirit which He had by the Incarnation was an exceptional spirit, raised above the standard of ordinary humanity by the holiness of God. But the most important point is the idea of power. The Resurrection is not only a fact but an influence, a fact of penetrating, wide-reaching influence. By rising from the dead our Lord has done something to us and for us. The Resurrection moves the history of the world and the possibilities of human character a definite step forward. It advances our position, if it does not create a new position.

For the influence of the Resurrection is ethical and moral, it has a practical bearing on life, it enables us to walk in newness of life. The Incarnation has reconstructed humanity, the Resurrection emphasizes the application of the reconstruction. "No longer I live, but Christ lives in me." We regard Christ as interceding for us in the presence of God, but His intercession is not unfruitful, it is supported by our own activity. He has consolidated His position by His Resurrection, but He has also consolidated ours. We are henceforth to walk in newness of life. Thus the Resurrection encourages the practice of the Incarnation. It is not a mere doctrine, but a practical stimulus. It is not merely an indication of future existence, but an impetus to present human activity. When on Easter Day Christians proclaimed to one another that the Lord was risen, they were not merely proclaiming a fact but they were exhorting one another to a revival of activity. They were shewing the connexion between faith and practice, between creed and conduct.

The union of humanity with Divinity in the In-

carnation has made practice easier, because it has emphasized the value of co-operation with God. The service of God is now more than a contract, it is a personal obligation. It belongs to the connexion of personality with personality, which in itself constitutes an obligation. It involves the freedom of voluntary service, it enables self-consciousness to express itself in free action, the independent sovereignty of feeling and thought and will, all devoted to a dependence which expands freedom instead of cancelling it. Working with God, we express ourselves, while we express Him. We know through Christ's experience that life has wonderful possibilities, because it has been proved to be expansive and progressive and victorious. We have seen death and sin, decay and evil, go down before a higher power, a power stronger than themselves. His experience, communicated to us, shared with us, becoming ours, is made a factor in our lives. We have received the communication of life, the participation in life. It is ours to develop the power that is in us, our inherent vitality, to use the gift, to put the talent out to interest.

In taking this practical view of the Resurrection, we fall back upon the Incarnation. We remember, we feel, the life that is in us, united to the Divine life, proceeding from the life of God. Our self-respect is increased, because we see a higher value put upon humanity. We think of a rise rather than a fall of man. We pass from the idea of original sin to the consciousness of life, which, taking its origin from God, suggests and indeed ensures original goodness. We think of life rather than of death, we even think of Christ's Resurrection more than of His Cross and Passion. As we pray that by His glorious Resurrection He will deliver us, we turn our thoughts less upon positive failure than upon possible success. There is no failure in the love of God. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, gave Him as a gift more than as a sacrifice. The gift involved the sacrifice, but the sacrifice was swallowed

up by the gift. The gift issued in the Incarnation, it passed through the process of the Atonement, but it was consummated in the Resurrection. Its intrinsic value seemed to be eclipsed on the Cross, but the pure metal was wrought out of the ordeal of suffering and sacrifice and emerged in more than its native brightness in the Resurrection. I may glory in the Cross, but I see upon it the Incarnate Son of God, and I recognize the Incarnation more clearly when I stand beside the empty tomb.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH

When it is said that the Word became flesh, we may ask whether the human spirit is left out of the account, and, if so, why? For it is claimed that spirit is of much higher value than flesh. But the question takes too little note of the origin of the human spirit, that it comes direct from God. In that case the need of Divinity is felt more in the physical nature than in the spiritual. It is there that sin is represented to have made its entrance, and, if the Incarnation is specially directed against the power of sin, the flesh would specially need reconstruction.

We may take it that flesh is not inherently sinful, although it is peculiarly open to the attack of sin. If matter were in itself evil, we cannot suppose that the Word would have become flesh. It was its tendency to evil that He pitied, and so He assumed it apart from its tendency and in spite of it, that He might correct the tendency. But still we ask what effect this had on the spirit of man. Here comes in the question of personality. It cannot be that God would come into communion with human physical nature alone. On the cross Christ gave up His spirit: that did not go into the grave with His body. And yet it was part of Him, part of His humanity, however closely joined with His Divinity. Perhaps it is that the more essentially human part is purposely named, in order to point out the definite assumption of humanity. It carries with it the presence of spirit, and we are not to suppose that in Christ His Divinity takes the place of the human spirit.

The Incarnation implies a correction of the idea that flesh is inherently sinful. Even S. Paul's expression 'flesh of sin' (σὰρξ ἁμαρτίας) may be explained as denoting the sphere into which sin is more readily admitted. And he himself speaks of a soulish (natural) body, which he contrasts with a spiritual body, whereby he seems to indicate the tendency of the flesh to predominate in the soul, of which it really only forms a part. And our Lord Himself speaks of His soul, which, being a term applied to humanity, must denote more than flesh. If we hold that He became completely man, we must also hold that His assumption of humanity included the possession of a human spirit, which does not prejudice the idea of His Divinity and of the predominance of Divinity over humanity in His personality.

It is impossible to determine the exact limits of Divinity and humanity in Christ's personality. The suspension of some of the manifestations of Divinity did not involve any sacrifice of Divine substance. But it also did not involve any substitution of human elements for Divine. We regard Him as completely human and completely Divine. We refuse to think that any disturbance of the proper balance of human nature could take place in Him. But this disturbance does take place in ordinary humanity, and it was a function of Christ to restore the balance. We may imagine that in Himself He applied His Divinity to maintain the balance true between the spirit and the flesh. This He did by always maintaining His human will subject to the will of God. This subjection was subjective, Divinely subjective. For the will of God was His own will in His relation to God, and it was voluntarily exercised over His humanity. In man the only condition of a proper subjection of the flesh is a like subjection to the will of God. Otherwise we get the paradox of the willingness of the spirit and the weakness of the flesh, which results in the predominance of the weaker side. One explanation of the Temptation of Christ takes the form of

representing Him as exposing this weakness of the flesh and showing how it can be met. This is done by treating the temptations as human, and asserting against them the strength of humanity, humanity in the ideal. Man has spiritual food at his command, man can avoid trying to force the display of God's power, man can worship God, and so declare himself on the side of good rather than of evil. But man will not do this unaided : it is impossible for him to please God without the help of God. But even so it is partly a question of interest : there is always a tendency to push the human interest. Only when the human interest is actually identified with Divine interest does the struggle end in the right way. Now in Christ the human interest was identified with the Divine interest, subjectively identified. That was because the two factors were combined in His personality. But still there is always a proper demarcation of boundaries in His personality. Temptation assailed but did not obliterate the demarcation.

We often fail through a false conception of values. In Christ there was no such confusion. Everything was valued in due proportion. With us the temporal asserts itself over the eternal, the seen over the unseen. Material value is accepted as a standard, without our realizing that it is bound to be a lower standard, because the material is intrinsically lower than the spiritual. And, as S. Paul implies, though he does not directly say so, our only corrective comes from the Incarnation. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. It was not merely that He set the example, but He actually supplied the basis of a changed attitude. For He reconstructed humanity, and so human beings took up a new attitude from within. He exercised, not external compulsion or influence, but internal impulsion. He readjusted the balance between the spirit and the flesh, so that more play was given to the Divine nature which had now come to

its own. But at the same time the true position of the flesh was reasserted. It could no longer be regarded as inherently depraved, since Christ had adopted it for His own. It was rather declared to be important instead of negligible, important as an instrument of the spirit—an instrument, not an enemy. For in most of our Lord's miracles His appeal is to the spirit through the body. Hence the need of faith on the part of the object of the miracle : he must surrender his spirit if his body is to be healed. Hence also the connexion of forgiveness of sins with bodily restoration.

Arguing from human analogy, we may say that our Lord exercised His will in the region of the spirit. It is in that region that we exercise our will. That, more than the devotion of our mind or of our feelings, is the devotion of ourselves. We concentrate our faculties on one particular point, selecting that above all others in our exercise of choice, and in that direction we apply our activity. And, as it is in the spirit that we are nearest to God, so all religious energy consists in the devotion of the will. It is not spasmodic action that counts, but regulated activity. It includes feeling, for religion is love, and it includes thought, for religion is knowledge of God. But these have to be practical if they are to be effective, for feeling may remain at the stage of mere sentiment or emotion, and knowledge may stop short at the collection of facts. When the will is brought to bear upon them, they reach the effective stage. It is no real objection that the devotion of the will to God is a sacrifice of personal independence. To serve God is to reign, because then the personality is able voluntarily to express itself in its completeness. The voluntariness safeguards the self-consciousness and frees action from the charge of being mechanical.

No one who saw our Lord's action could charge Him with want of independence. It was noticed that He spoke with authority, He showed every indication of originality. But His acceptance of God's

will was really an assertion of His own will, because of His Divinity. We cannot say of ourselves that we are in an analogous position, still the affinity of the spirit to God justifies the comparison of our position with His, and the following of His example. And, if our Lord's assumption of humanity includes the domain of spirit as well as of flesh, as the spiritual nature of God would imply, it is in our spirit above all that we shall apply the analogy. In our spirit we achieve the devotion of our will. From the authority thus acknowledged and the originality thus expressed we draw our independence. It gives us freedom of development, it expands and does not cramp our powers. On the other hand, the domination of the flesh is a cramping process. It is slavery, not sovereignty, for the ostensible servant becomes the master. It is impossible to direct the will along physical lines alone. The will can use the body as its instrument, which may on its part usurp the control. But the resistance is a usurpation, a disturbing of the proper balance, not a legitimate rule even on a lower grade. In certain cases which came under our Lord's notice, the balance had been abnormally disturbed. These He cured by dealing directly with the more fatally affected quarter, the evil spirit, the spirit that had grown evil. He cast it out, completely cleansed it. The devotion of the spirit to Him is a gradual securing of the same end by subjective attention. For it is in the spirit that we secure the presence of God, as our Lord indicated when He breathed on His disciples and bade them receive the Holy Spirit. It is in the spirit that our original connexion with God is formed. And, if that was so in the case of man's creation, we cannot suppose that it would cease to be so in the case of man's re-creation, in the Incarnation. The body is so intimately connected with the spirit that it is impossible to believe that the statement " the Word became flesh " is intended to refer to the body only. All the evidence drawn from the story of our Lord's life is against this

supposition. The statement clearly refers in a general way to human nature, and may even have been made in that form to emphasize the contrast between Divinity and humanity. It remains certain that the assumption of humanity involved its complete assumption, and the suggestion that the Divine nature replaced the human spirit would leave the humanity seriously impaired.

On the other hand, the inclusion of the human spirit strengthens the debt owed by human nature to the Incarnation. It is not a potential but an actual advance that has been made, actual on both sides, body and spirit. The spirit is now more willing, and the flesh less weak. Placed by God in the position of command, because the spiritual factor is in its essence of a finer nature than the material factor, it has received a confirmation of its superiority. It came from God, and it has received an additional assurance of the presence of God. If Christ is in us, He is essentially in our spirit, which is God's. That is the inspiration of the Incarnation. It is not the doctrine but the fact of the Incarnation that specially concerns us. For it is a matter of life more than of thought or speech, of practice more than of theory. But reconstruction involves consideration and realization. We cannot proceed as if no radical process had taken place. The Incarnation must become to us a matter of self-consciousness. It must determine our self-consciousness in the direction of God. And this it will do, if we allow to Divinity and humanity their due proportion, their true relation. This depends on the proportion that we acknowledge, on the relation that we observe in our estimation of the personality of Christ. We must relate His personality to ours. We must recognize an analogy between the two. Now S. Paul declares that ours is a soulish body and must not be mistaken for a spiritual body. But he also asserts the superiority of the spirit to the body, while he acknowledges that there is a tendency to weaken that superiority. His solution lies in the

victory granted by God through Jesus Christ. Is this a solution that is to be expected, or is it rather a solution that is to be accepted, as having been already effected? There is no question that he regards it as definitely effected. We may claim that the victory has come through the incarnate Christ. That is the significance of the Resurrection. For in the Resurrection the Incarnation bears its fruit. Life, the principle of the Incarnation, is asserted in the Resurrection. And life is the principle that is asserted in human nature. But we do not say that the body is more living, although we acknowledge that it has developed its powers. We rather trace the growth of life to the spirit, as the leading factor of human nature. We are thus enabled to devote our will more directly and more sympathetically to the service of God. This is the result of the Word become flesh. All true inspection of the phenomena accompanying the process gives a spiritual conception of the process and its phenomena. And our introspection achieves a similarly spiritual result. Had the Incarnation been a disturbance of the material sphere, it would not have established an effective or a lasting result. But, because it was a welding of the two spheres, the spiritual and the material, it broke down the antagonism between them, and yet maintained their proper relation. So that life now consists for us in the maintenance of a proper relation, and we learn to express ourselves more truly as we are. We do not become one-sided, but we become better balanced. It was the one-sided tendency of human nature that Christ came to correct. It is that one-sided tendency that is established by the story of the Fall, and, even if that is explained as an allegory, it is at least a picture of a fact. But now the last Adam has established another fact. He has established the supremacy of spirit, and He has given it the means of asserting its supremacy. Through Him the spirit is more completely superior to the flesh, more capable of assert-

ing its supremacy. It is not only in reference to a future resurrection that the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. For life, if we follow S. John, is a present not a future gift, the basis of the reconstruction of human nature, the germ of the influence of the Incarnation. And life, whatever its influence on material existence, finds its appropriate field in the spirit. For life is described as light, and the description has a spiritual significance.

Life is the opposite of death, and we remember that baptism is described as regeneration, the gift of a new quality of life. The gift is made to a living person, and it is impossible to give him what he has already. We can imagine that he has the capacity of death, and the gift is a counteracting power to death. Christ, who became man, had the power to die, as was proved by His actual death. But He also had the power to live, as was proved by His Resurrection. So then in Him were two opposite forces, life and death, and of these life was stronger than death. He has transmitted this force to humanity, not in the region of the flesh, but in the region of the spirit. Humanity is as mortal as ever, but it has become more immortal, because of the life in the spirit. We talk of an immortal soul, but the soul's immortality is situated in the spirit. The soul is the personality, and the personality has spiritual union with Christ. Its regeneration is its union, life is the basis of its union. In His conversation with Nicodemus, our Lord points out the double application of life, as being of water and of the spirit. It affects the lower and the higher side of man. We are not bound to see in the double application a composite character of life. We may allow that a spiritual force is effective in the material as well as in the spiritual world. Especially we may allow this if we believe in the symbolism of Nature. We do not confuse the material world with the spiritual, but we consider that it is under the same law that rules in the spiritual world. But the Incarnation has widened

and emphasized the application of the law, for the Incarnation is itself symbolical. Symbolism is not opposed to reality, it explains reality. It represents life as manifested in more than one form, and one manifestation is a picture of the other.

This, indeed, is proved by the Incarnation, which implies a relation between flesh and spirit that allows of their being brought into such intimate connexion. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit"—this may point to combination rather than separation. Because they are separate, therefore they need to be combined. Although they are separate, they can be combined. The combination, effected by our Lord, is extended from His nature to ours. Looking at Him, we no longer marvel that we must be born again. The marvel is rather that we do not recognize not only the need but the fact. Those who separate the material from the spiritual world do not consider the Incarnation. But both S. Paul and S. John consider it. S. Paul thinks of the victory achieved by Christ and contributed to us. S. John thinks of the life immanent in the Word and communicated to us. And, when we think of the spirit and the flesh, we regard them in their new relation. We associate them together in the new birth, as we associate water with the spirit. We take a sacramental view of them, and so we make our life sacramental. We take a symbolic view of the flesh, and so we bring it into line with the spirit. This is religion, not an addition to existing views of religion, but a transformation and a reconstruction of actual existence, in fact as well as in conception. This is harmonizing life, and the soul is a harmony, because in the soul, which is our personality, the spirit and the flesh are brought under one law.

CHAPTER XX

THE INCARNATION AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

The consideration of the relation between the spirit and the flesh in a human personality raises the question of the part taken by the Holy Spirit in the Incarnation. It is from the Spirit of God that the spirit of man takes its origin, and it is the Spirit of God that was specially concerned in the Incarnation. Those who deny the Virgin birth deny the working of the Spirit of God in the Incarnation. They may say that the Incarnation is not tied to the necessity of a Virgin birth, and that belief in the Incarnation is not precluded by the denial of the Virgin birth. But then they assume an ordinary human generation of our Lord, and they are really substituting an inspiration of a human being for the Incarnation. Now the Incarnation supposes an influence of God exercised for the production of a Divine and human being, but this other idea of the Divine process represents the Divine influence as exercised on a human being created in the ordinary way and selected to receive it. According to this view Jesus is inspired by God. But in what way? The Jewish prophets were inspired by God—the ordinary religious person is inspired by God. What would be the effect on humanity at large of such an inspiration of Jesus Christ?

In the first place Jesus Christ would be a man. He would contain within His human personality all the human elements and tendencies. These would be

directed by God, because God so chose to direct them. Is God's direction continuous and unceasing? What becomes of our Lord's human will? It is controlled by God's will. He is made to do what God wishes Him to do. And what would be His influence on other men? It would be the influence of example: they would do as they saw Him doing or as they heard that He did. Is such an influence capable of persuading humanity? Can it account for the power of Christianity during nineteen centuries?

The doctrine of the Incarnation teaches quite a different method of influence. It teaches Divinity in Christ, inherent Divinity. The other theory teaches the external influence of Divinity exercised on Jesus Christ—externally exercised so as to become internal, if that is possible, and then exercised through Him on His followers. Where is the place for Incarnation in this conception?

They may say that the Holy Spirit of God was constantly directing the thoughts and feelings and actions of Jesus, but they *must* allow that He was a man spiritualized by God, and a spiritualized man is not at all the same as the Incarnate Word. It seems as if He, in common with all men, had a spirit derived originally from God, but a spirit more fully stimulated by Divine influence *after* its human conjunction.

But the Incarnation supposes a Son of God. How can the Son of God be first of all a son of man? Surely our Lord calls Himself the Son of man because He was previously the Son of God, He does not present Himself as a son of man glorified into the Son of man. Take away the idea of Divine generation, and you *must* substitute for it the idea of Divine inspiration applied to a product of human generation. That is not the Incarnation.

The Incarnation presents a human personality, produced and so rendered Divine by Divine agency, by the action of the Holy Spirit of God. Incarna-

tion means clothing Divinity in flesh, presenting Divinity in flesh. The other explanation of the birth of Christ supposes Divinity applied to spirit and flesh *after* the union of the two. It supposes the selection, not of humanity but of a human creature, for the special exercise of later inspiration. Inspiration is not Incarnation.

It is not easy to define the Holy Spirit of God, but, according to the latter theory, the Holy Spirit must be regarded as superior to Jesus Christ, as exercising control over Him. If it allows the exercise of control within Him, it still regards the Spirit's influence as communicated to Jesus Christ, not as originally inherent in Him. Not originally, before He became a man.

Is it supposed, then, that the Holy Spirit is the essence of God the Father?—the Son is excluded as non-existent. In that case there is a confusion between the Holy Spirit and the Father's own essence, and we get back to Monotheism.

The Catholic Church believes in the Trinity, it recognizes no inferiority of essence, no confusion of essence. It believes that the Holy Spirit of God was an agent, a factor, in the Incarnation. It believes that there is more in the world of fact than meets the eye and answers to thought, it believes that the unintelligible is not the impossible. Its explanation of the Incarnation may be ranged under the head of miracle, but no one has yet proved miracle to be impossible, however unintelligible. Unreality is not the same as mystery.

But still we have to try to explain what we mean by the Holy Spirit of God, we cannot use the name without attaching a meaning to it. We say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and we call Him one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. We say that His influence was exercised over the Incarnation, that the Incarnation is the result of His working. He is seen in the process of the Incarnation. There are two ways of testing this

belief, one by its reasonableness, the other by its support in evidence.

Spirit is the element or principle of life, life in its widest and deepest sense. Spirit is energy, it is not only existent but active. The Holy Spirit is Life manifested in God, Energy working in God, but a Personality, not a quality. We can conceive of God the Holy Spirit apart from God the Father and God the Son, though united to both. God is Love, yet we do not regard the Holy Spirit as Love, but rather as Life. A loving God can and does manifest His love in energy, in life. If, then, we believe in the Incarnation, we believe that in that God manifested His energy, His life. We believe that the Holy Spirit was specially concerned in the Incarnation. We believe that the Incarnation is a manifestation of life, an expression of energy. We believe in the self-communication of God in the Incarnation, a definite act which produced a definite effect by a definite process. We believe it to be an actual manifestation of God. If what is called the begetting of the Son is an act of the Father, the Incarnation of that Word is an act of the Holy Spirit.

Our Lord Himself calls the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, the Advocate. He Who was sent by God to support us in our human need continues the work that He began in the Incarnation. He reminds us of Christ Whom He provided for us. The life of the Incarnate Word came by Divine means, and, if the process was a miracle, we accept what we should not have expected but do not contest.

If we carry ourselves back to the original creation, the bestowal of human life, we see a miracle. The Jews attributed the original creation to the action of the Spirit of God brooding upon the waters. They attributed the creation of man to an inbreathing of God. Is it to be denied or contested? Is the similar action of God in the Incarnation to be denied or contested? We have evidence that the mother of Jesus accepted her mission in this sense. She

might have urged, and she did urge, the abnormal character of her position, but she accepted it. It is a question of need, of a supply of life to meet the need.

In the spiritual world the pervading activity is spiritual. That world is so mysterious, so alien to the normal world in which we habitually live, that its principles seem to us abnormal. Even in the material world we have to learn to see, much more in the spiritual world do we need to learn to see. But the life of the Spirit is not necessarily disproved by the failure to appreciate it or to live it. We see spiritually minded persons moving in a world that seems not our own, but that does not allow us to deny its reality. Certainly the plea that it is beyond our experience is no argument for its unreality. But it is not altogether beyond our experience, even in our own conception. For certainly the conception of life or energy in God is not unintelligible to us.

In the Old Testament the idea of the Spirit of God is not absent, and, if we allow that it is more definite in the New Testament, we have to account for its increased clearness. The Incarnation accounts for it. S. John tells us that our Lord breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." He tells us that one function of the Holy Spirit was to remind them of the words that they had heard from Christ Himself. They had within them the gift of life bestowed through that Holy Spirit: He used as the means of developing that life the means by which it had been implanted in them.

It is through the mediation of Christ that the Holy Spirit works in us. It was through the Holy Spirit that that mediation was originally made possible. The Incarnation is an epoch in the history of life. As the Owner of life, God has a right to be the Giver of life.

In any case, the Incarnation is the revival of humanity. Christ calls Himself the Life, but He also calls Himself the Way, and there is no reason

why He should not be the Way of Life. How is He the Way of Life, if not through the action of the Holy Spirit in the Incarnation, Who, working the revival of humanity, made the Word of God the Divine Way of Life?

CHAPTER XXI

THE INCARNATION AND THE CHURCH

The reconstruction of humanity has been shown to take effect in each member of humanity. But the keynote of our Lord's mission is the approach of the kingdom of God as well as repentance, and, if we allow the individual appeal, we must also allow the general appeal. Now the kingdom of God may be explained to mean the sovereignty of God, but that cannot be supposed to apply merely to the individual. A king reigns over a number of subjects, and the kingship of God includes the whole world in its sway. It implies, in fact, a society, such as is implied in Christ's expression, 'My Church.' What is the relation of the Incarnation to the Christian Church?

A Church is a society, but it is not a mere society. It stands or falls by the life of its members and their union with one another. They have a pervading spirit or tone, which they maintain or weaken. Are we to suppose that the influence of Christ is of individual action or of general action or of both?

The direction of the Incarnation upon humanity certainly applies generally as well as individually. Humanity is not at present an interchangeable name for the Church of Christ, but that is no reason why the bounds of the Church should not ultimately coincide with the bounds of humanity. The prayer that the kingdom of God may come implies development, and may, and indeed must, mean extension.

But the point is, what is the relation of the Incarnation to the Christian Church? Ignatius said, "Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic

Church," making religion depend upon the personal presence of Christ. The Church of Christ, as a society, as Catholic, is determined by the presence of Christ.

Now it has been argued that the presence of Christ is life in humanity, which is given, and is effective if we accept the gift by developing it. But we develop it, not as isolated receivers of the gift, but as joined to one another in its bestowal and its exercise, and so we may well consider it as Christ's gift to His Church. If a number of persons separately practise the development of the life that is in them, without any reference to the natural bond which exists between them, they are forgetting the claims of humanity upon them, and Christ's claim upon humanity. Jesus says to S. Peter, who has acknowledged Him to be the Christ, " Upon this rock I will build My Church," meaning that this confession of his is the one solid foundation for the society in which the Christian religion is learnt and practised In the same way S. Paul declares that the Ephesians were called in one hope of their calling, that God called them to share in one common hope, and it is significant that the same word ' call ' appears in both cases ' Church ' (ἐκκλησία) meaning ' a calling out ' to an assembly. S. Paul also assigns the same foundation as our Lord Himself had previously assigned : " no one can lay another foundation beside that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." And, when he is urging unity as the keynote of the Church's existence, he ends with the declaration that God is in all. This, then, is the principle of the Church's being, unity conditioned by God's presence.

And this is really the relation which the Holy Spirit bears to the Church. The act of Incarnation has brought humanity into God and so given it Divine life. This Divine life is both a stimulus to the individual believer and an inspiration to the social body into which humanity has been crystallized by the un-isolated acceptance of the gift. The society, the collected body of the children of God, traces its

origin to Christ Himself. It is pledged to maintain and hand on that original calling. Its essential object is to build up the body of Christ, on a principle of combined socialism and individualism, by which each member is true to his own characteristics, and at the same time loyal to the united purpose. In either case dependence on Christ is the enabling means, for did not Christ renew each member severally, and did He not bequeath to the whole society the Divine maintenance of its corporality, the revivifying influence of the Holy Spirit? In either case the gift was life, the principle was life, life given by the Incarnation, life constantly renewed by the Divine Energy which constituted the power of the Incarnation.

If we are left to our own choice in regard to the development of the gift of life, the question arises, What will determine our acceptance? Is it a matter of chance, or of caprice, or of inclination? It might be so in individual cases, it cannot be so in the case of a society. For the mere fact of the existence of the society implies the grasp of a certain system, a certain principle. The Christian society has accepted, it accepted from the first, the fact of the Incarnation. Is it so constructed that the influence of the Incarnation works upon it automatically? The policy of a society determines its action, but the establishment of a definite policy does not preclude a waxing or a waning of interest in that policy during the course of the society's existence. This principle is fully illustrated in the history of the Christian Church. Much of its evolution has not been purely Christian. In our Thirty-nine Articles of Religion we declare that general Councils may err and sometimes have erred even in things pertaining unto God. We declare specifically that the Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome have erred not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith. Indeed, the very existence of these Articles argues the idea that

the Church of Rome has erred. So that the bond of union which constitutes the Church of Christ, though it was sufficient to establish the Church, is not sufficient to maintain it. The intervention of God in human affairs is not isolated or spasmodic, it is continuous, and the root idea of the parable of the Sower implies, not the mere sowing of the seed, but the nurture of the plant. We believe that God, Who gave His life, its life, to the Church, has all along been maintaining that life. The function of the Holy Spirit was not merely to inspire the Church at Pentecost, but to remind it all along of the responsibilities originally committed to it by its Founder. He would bring to its remembrance all that Christ had said. He would indeed be the presence of Christ Himself—" I come unto you." " I am with you all the days." The presence of Christ requires the constant renewal of His presence, and life given must be life maintained. The healthful spirit of God's grace is constantly sent down upon the Church and the continual dew of His blessing is poured upon it, so that it may truly please Him. So is maintained the honour of its Mediator and Advocate, its Founder, the Giver of its original life. So God the Holy Spirit supports the work which He did when He enabled the Incarnation.

The history of the Church has demonstrated its possession of this gift, the gift of life. Gibbon, in his summary of the causes of the rapid growth of the Christian Church, puts as the first cause " the inflexible and, if we may use the expression, the intolerant zeal of the Christians." What he calls ' zeal ' we may call energy or life. The characteristic which is most frequently assigned to the civilization in which Christianity found its environment is deadness, and to persuade such an environment of the value of Christianity required nothing short of the counter-principle of life. The astonishing advance made by Christianity between the middle of the second century and the middle of the fourth is a

proof, in view of the active opposition added to this apparently invincible barrier, of the vitality of the religion which asserted its influence within and over this environment. It had not indeed to meet irreligion, but a very real craving for religion, observable amongst those who had been brought up in the atmosphere of Greek and Roman heathenism. This had been nurtured by philosophy, and shewed itself in such phenomena as the worship of Egyptian gods and the cult of Mithraism and the still more potent influence of the Mysteries. Christianity had to shew that it met the want of those who were thus disposed towards its influence and yet opposed it and even persecuted it. That it prevailed is undoubtedly due to the spirit of the religion underlying the efforts of its professors, and we trace the victory of the Church to the life of the Church, not simply the life lived by its members, but the life inherent in the society from the life of its Founder. We trace the victory of the Church to the Incarnation.

Thus the Church, a Divine body, reaps the fruits of the Incarnation. In the Nicene Creed the Holy Spirit is called the Quickener, the Giver of life. He is also called the Lord. He has authority over the Church, and He uses His authority in the domain of life. We are told by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews that Christ through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God. This He did through the Divine influence pervading and inspiring His humanity. The same influence which inspired and supported Him is necessary for His body, which originates from Him and is endowed with His life. A renegade from the Church is an insulter of the Spirit of grace, so says the same author. Clearly it is not merely the individual Christian who can grieve the Holy Spirit of God, nor is it in regard to his individuality only that he is responsible to God. It is quite true that he contains the germ of life which is given to each member of humanity, but he also shares in the social union which

receives life in humanity at large. If the Son of God is to be subjected to God, that God may be all in all, the subjection of the Son to the Father carries with it the subjection of His Church to God and the principle of God's immanence in His Church—all in all. The immanence of God in the Church is its inspiration by the Holy Spirit, Lord as well as Life-giver.

Even in Jewish minds the Divine inspiration of the Church was entertained. For the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews explains the migration of Abraham as conditioned by the prophetic foresight with which the founder of the Jewish nation looked forward to the city which has the foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

CHAPTER XXII

THE INCARNATION AND THE COMMUNITY

Aristotle tells us that man is naturally a political animal, living in a State, and that a State exists to live well. We have considered the question of the direct influence of God on the Church, implied in the elevation of humanity by the Incarnation, the inspiration of the Divine society. Is it possible to demonstrate the inspiration of the human society, the human polity?

The union of Church and State is defended on the principle that there are two sides of life, the civil and the religious. They are lived by the same person, but his relation to each is different. In the one case he considers his God, in the other case he considers his fellow-man. He may be both godly and righteous, combining his duty to God with his duty to his neighbour, and, even if he considers his neighbour in the light of his God, he is bound not to confuse his view of either.

In his civil life a man has responsibilities and duties. In these he is bound by civil law, which is regulated by the social principles. In regard to this we are members one of another. The validity of our own rights depends upon our recognition of the validity of the rights of others. There is at least a moral sanction implied and involved. But, if we argue that the Incarnation affects the individual life and the life of the Church, can we also argue that it affects the life of the civil community?

It might seem at first sight that to claim the

influence of the Incarnation on civil life, as well as its influence on the Church, which is a religious community, is to commit the prevalent and fatal mistake of separating the secular from the religious. But on the contrary it is rather to maintain the close connexion between the two. According to the highest view, the secular is religious. A man does not cease to be religious when he is doing secular acts. But does a State cease to be religious when it is engaged in its duties, or is it a mistake to consider that its action can ever be religious at all? If we grant the second supposition, the first follows. But, if we grant the second supposition, are we not confusing the State with the Church? The Church is concerned specially with spiritual matters. Does the superiority of the spiritual over the material carry with it the inclusion of the material in the domain of the spiritual?

According to S. Paul the spiritual person examines all things, whereas the soulish man does not accept spiritual facts and truths. The one is under the influence of the Divine Spirit, the other is under the influence of his human personality, developed in too human a direction. In civil life the tendency is to take this attitude, and so to separate the secular from the religious. But the member of the State, if he is really religious, *has* this spiritual perception, and will be insincere if he stifles it in any circumstances. He cannot abrogate his principles. Returning to Aristotle's definition of human civil purpose, to live well, are we to say that this definition, which holds for an individual citizen, holds also for the State, the community itself? And, if so, what is living well, as applied to the State? Its object is the common good: is the common good simply an expansion of the individual good? And, if this is granted, are we not identifying the State with the Church?

According to Burke, they are identical. "In a Christian commonwealth the Church and the State

are one and the same thing, being different integral parts of the same whole. . . . Religion is so far, in my opinion, from being out of the province or duty of a Christian magistrate, that it is, and it ought to be, not only his care, but the principal thing in his care : because it is one of the great bonds of human society, and its object the supreme good, the ultimate end and object of man himself." (Speech on the Unitarian Petition, 1792. *Burke's Works*, vol. x. p. 43, ed. 1818, quoted by Dr. T. Arnold in Appendix to *Inaugural Lecture on History*, p. 53, ed. 1885.)

A national Church is really the State expressing itself on the religious side. It would be more accurate to say that the State and the Church are the same whole regarded from different points of view, rather than "different integral parts of the same whole." Their origin is different, the origin of each society is on a different basis. The State is based upon the common good, studied from the human point of view : the Church is based upon the common good, studied from the Divine point of view. Still the human point of view is a moral one, even if it is not conceded to be religious.

Now the Incarnation, efficacious as it is above all in the religious world, is efficacious in the moral world. If it has given life to the individual, it must affect his moral standpoint. Thus his dealings with the community are coloured by his possession and his realization of the Incarnation. He has been raised in power of living, and his potentiality, expressing itself in actuality, determines his practical life.

Similarly the State, human in its objects, is also moral in its objects. The Incarnation, working in humanity, has raised the standard of humanity together with its potentiality. Morality is at least coloured by religion. If you get a number of men, individually moral, working for a specific object, their aim will have a moral tendency. It may be weakened by numbers, but it still exists. Thus the

Incarnation makes itself felt in the combined deliberations and actions of the community. In other words, the State, even if it does not ostensibly set itself to act upon the principle of life, is, even if it be unconscious of it, working out the principle of life. Of course, if it keeps the principle deliberately before it, it will work it out more effectively, but in any case the principle is at work, because it is organic, not mechanical.

Many people would be loth to allow that this principle does underlie all the civil and social reforms which have been carried out in the name of something other than religion. It is difficult to realize, especially in the craze for modernity and the exaltation of the present, the claim of the past. But indeed the claim is not merely of the past. It is a present claim, because life is always existent. When I do an action, I do not trouble to review all the predisposing causes which converge in me upon that action, and I probably consider merely the present action, if indeed the force of habit does not prevent me from even considering that. But the motives and the causes remain. Even an irreligious community may owe more to its inherent spirit than to its environment.

The Incarnation, which has affected environment, has affected still more deeply the spirit of a community, both individually and collectively. Therefore it is not idle to explain the action of a community, apart from the action of a Church or of the Church, as based upon the principles and even upon the internal influence of the Incarnation.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE INCARNATION AND THE LOVE OF HUMANITY

We notice as a trait in the sympathy of Christ His wonderful appreciation of the need of encouraging self-respect. He is very careful not to wound the feelings of those with whom He deals, and we never find scorn in His attitude to men, except in the case of the insincere. To these indeed He gives no quarter, perhaps because He regards insincerity as a special mark of satanic influence, and we know that against Satan He waged constant and uncompromising war. But He is always more ready to encourage than to depress, as is shown by His constant intercourse with sinners, whom He regards as His special charge. And yet He does not trifle with the seriousness of sin. He seems to regard it as a disease, but a curable disease, in which the patient can minister to himself, however much he needs external curative power. But, when He tells a victim of sin to go and sin no more, He implies that the very victim has some power of resistance, some means of self-assertion. He appeals to this higher sense, He uses encouragement, He touches the feeling of self-respect. This implies the value of personality, and it implies that, if my personality is of value to me, I am bound to give its proper value to every other personality. Now the value of personality does not depend merely on our Lord's attitude to those with whom He had personal dealings, but rather on His general attitude to humanity. Thus the Incarnation is the revaluation of humanity, and it

determines our relation to one another and our treatment of others. If all are valuable to God, then all are valuable to us. If I am to respect myself, because of God's attitude to me, I must also respect others, because of God's attitude to them. Thus self-respect produces, not egoism, but altruism.

"Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you" is a rule of Christian practice, but it is more than a rule, it is the outcome of Christian reconstruction. It is a religious requirement, because it is a natural law. It is a natural axiom proceeding from the Incarnation. Humanity joined to God receives a consolidation in itself. All members of the human race share in the benefit, and this proves that God's regard includes them all. If the love of God is without exception, it sets the tone of our regard for one another. No one is outside Divine consideration, therefore no one is outside human consideration. The fatherhood of God establishes the brotherhood of man, and our duty to God involves our duty to our neighbour.

We do not only see in others cases of God's consideration, but we also see in them the actual proof of God's love, for we see the communication of His nature. It is because they have been reconstructed, because the influence of Christ has passed into them and elevated their nature, that they deserve our respect and consideration. God, who raises each man's self-respect, has increased the value of each personality. That also increases the value that we must attach to all the personalities with which we come in contact. Thus the Incarnation is not only the measure of our own value but of our conception of the value of others. It must determine our philanthropy, our sympathy, our view of class distinctions, our appreciation of the claims of humanity upon us. Directly and indirectly, Christianity has bettered the relations of man to man. It has raised the status of women, it has removed slavery, it has established hospitals everywhere, it

has cared for the poor, it has educated the young. We may trace these results to civilization, but civilization owes more than it recognizes to the Christian religion, the teaching of Christ, the example of Christ, the influence of Christ. It will owe still more when each of us recognizes, beyond the influence of Christ in himself, the presence of Christ in each other personality. For then we shall see that we have a common ground of life. The differences of class and even of character, of taste, of intellect, of wealth, will vanish in the common likeness, the likeness of man to God. We shall regard nothing so much as the life which each has received from God Himself, the life that Christ communicated to humanity in the Incarnation. The truism that every man is a brother will be lost in the truth that everyone participates in that life. That will be the passport to the heart, the key to the locked door, the solution of the difficulty. Why did God assume humanity, if not to declare the comprehensiveness of His scheme of humanity? He would proclaim unity, not uniformity; He would not proclaim equality, in the sense of a rigid standard of values, but equality in the common possession of life, equality in the derivation of life from God. He would have men differ in their characteristics and capabilities, which they would all contribute to the common end, the common good. He would allow competition, in the rivalry of each man with himself, whom (as William Law has said) he is to be always striving to exceed. But the differences and the rivalry are to be merged in humanity, in the constant struggle to raise that towards its intended perfection. The germ of life is to be developed to the growth destined for it by the Incarnation, which regards individuals only as units of the humanity which the Word assumed in becoming flesh.

Surely we see here the only assurance of a reconstructed humanity. The Incarnation is not a mere doctrine, but neither is it a fiat of God which, issued

as with the sound of a trumpet, carries in itself the complete execution of its purpose. It is a gift of life, but it is also an appeal. Only the appeal is made to those who are equipped to rise to the occasion. They find in themselves a qualification, and they find in their fellow-men a claim. The grace of God is sufficient for us, and the grace of God given freely to all constitutes those with whom we have to deal fit subjects for our consideration. What we do to the least of Christ's brethren is, He says, done to Him. For they belong to Him, as sharers in His Incarnation. They are His representatives, because they have His life in them.

Thus our qualification substantiates the claim of others upon our consideration, and their claim reminds us of our qualification. The possession of life is more than any deficiency of characteristics, more than any inferiority of conditions. In our own case, it counts more than any presumed superiority of characteristics or conditions. All are free, because all have this freedom of life in themselves. Therefore all have the same right to develop their freedom, and it is in this that we can help them, by recognizing their freedom, that is, their claim to equal treatment. But this freedom constitutes a spiritual, as well as a material, claim. We are concerned in the welfare of others on the religious side as well as on the purely secular side. Indeed, it is not clear how far we are right in separating the two. To-day there is a great deal of reticence in raising religious questions in personal intercourse, although there is much readiness to raise them in print. But at least it is possible to show religious tolerance, and to recognize that others have their views, as we have ours, and to allow them equal sincerity. Probably, if we realized more vividly what religion means, we should not shrink from treating it as a subject that concerns us all. And certainly that treatment would help us to realize its reality. If the Incarnation is a fact, religion is a reality of the deepest significance. For

it is a part of our very nature, internal not extraneous. So it was treated by the earliest Christians, and so it persuaded those who observed their attitude to religion. Perhaps it is neglect of the Incarnation that determines our present apparent indifference.

Be that as it may, we have a claim upon us from humanity at large. The sons of God are keepers of their brothers. They belong to the same Father in heaven and their relation to Him has been defined more clearly by the Son of God. He never called Him 'our Father,' but He did call Him 'My Father' and 'your Father.' And He has taught us all to call Him our Father. This is the teaching of the Son of God and the Son of man, and it opens our eyes to our human responsibility to be so taught by the Word of God.

The love of humanity is not a vague and evasive sentiment. It is a definite acknowledgment of the value of human personality. It is not an unreasoning view to take of humanity, considering that Christ called Himself the Son of man. If He claimed to represent humanity, His followers need not be ashamed to love their fellow-men. At least they are bound to reverence the Christ in man, and, if they recognize the full significance of the Incarnation, they will base upon that their love of humanity. This love of humanity is not mere toleration, which it includes but far outstrips. Anyone who says, "No longer do I live, but Christ lives in me," is bound to allow the same claim to others also, and, though not all acknowledge the fact, all are subject to the process. It may be that my recognition of the fact will open my neighbour's eyes to its reality for him. For the value that we set upon another is often the first step to the raising of his own valuation of himself. Moreover, to think highly of another may increase my own self-respect.

How far is it possible to cultivate this love? Some will tell us that we regulate our general view of humanity by the standard of some particular

specimen that we know and revere. On this principle they will point to Christ Himself and claim that His example has raised the human race in our estimation. That is true, but our dependence on Christ in this matter goes deeper than that. It is not merely His high standard but the universal relation to Christ that ought to determine our appreciation of humanity. We base that appreciation upon sympathy, not merely because of our relation to one another but because of the Christ that is in each and all. It is the union of human nature with Christ that should determine our valuation of human nature. We must regard humanity as holier for Him, worthier for Him, more lovable for Him. We must consider potentiality, not only performance. If we are united with Christ, if we are aiming at closer union with Him, we shall not need to be taught our duty to our neighbour.

The parable of the good Samaritan, in other words, the life of Christ, has widened the range of meaning attaching to our 'neighbour.' In Christ all are near to one another, and my neighbour is my fellow-man. Not my fellow-Christian, but my fellow-man. The bond of definite religion is strong, but the bond of Divine sonship is an inviolable obligation. We may wish to select the objects of our affection and we may maintain with truth that love cannot be forced, but it is certainly true that in love practice improves, if it does not make perfect. There are some persons who instinctively recognize the good in others, and there are some who more readily detect the evil. The Incarnation establishes the principle of good in all, and the practice of the Incarnation necessitates the emphasizing of it as well as the recognition of it. To deny its existence is a misunderstanding, if not a denial, of the Incarnation itself. The phenomenon of Christianity cannot be explained by a merely external influence of the life of Christ, or even by His personal influence upon a few followers of His own time. That would indeed be to limit His work in

time and space. It can only be explained by an acknowledgment of His influence as a personality brought into relation with all the personalities with whom He had relation as God and desired to have relation as man. There is no reasonable method of exclusion either as regards Divinity or as regards humanity, and therefore we regard the Incarnation as universal in its scope.

It may be asked, Are we to apply this principle to politics, to the professions, to commerce, to social questions? And the answer is that the politician, the professional man, the man of business, and the socialist are all presumably Christian, all subject to the influence of Christ, all included in the benefits of the Incarnation. May a man deny his faith and repudiate his obligations, because he is dealing officially or professionally or commercially or socially with his fellow-men? His religion does not take him out of the world, and, if religion means the sense of God's presence, the world does not separate him from religion. He is not bound to decorate his office or his shop or indeed his home with texts from the Bible, but no work is so secular that it needs to be kept apart from God, nor is God so limited in His action as to be conceivably separate from any human work. There have been politicians who were men of deep religious feeling, and in the professions men who sincerely professed religion, men of business whose honesty and diligence were the reflexion of their most sacred convictions, socialists who could trace their socialism to the principles of Christ Himself—and a man's principle, if it is sound and sincere, is the basis of all his actions. It is therefore mere sophistry to argue that he may have two sides to his character and practice, or that his life may be alien to his worship. If he is a Christian, his light will shine wherever he is and whatever he does, and we have only to turn to the life of Christ to see what He requires. The Incarnation is the inclusion of humanity in Divinity and the bestowal of life, the

Divine gift, upon humanity. The possession of life is the equipment of each human personality.

The fact is that the brotherhood of man clears the way to the solution of many a difficulty of practical life. The recognition of this Divine principle consolidates the human race, and raises the standard of human life. Humanity, recognized as ennobled and enabled by the Incarnation, shakes itself clear of the fetters that shackle its efforts, and by raising its standard of valuation revolutionizes its environment. Life is perfect harmony with environment. Divine life reacts upon environment and makes environment more Divine. The realization of Christian obligation and Christian equipment works the same change, and the principle of sympathy with humanity will revolutionize humanity.

Magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE INCARNATION AND MODERN LIFE

We may now consider how the Incarnation bears upon modern life, not merely as a doctrine, but as an influence. A doctrine is the outcome of thought and reacts upon thought, but, when it reacts upon actual life, it is a practical influence. On the one side there is the definite reconstruction, which we enjoy without ourselves contributing to it, and on the other side there is our own contribution, the acceptance of our position and the application of our own personality to the requirements of the position.

But the effectiveness of the position lies in our acceptance of it—that is the effect of freewill—and our acceptance is faith. This is an age of criticism and doubt, so much so that criticism often implies or produces doubt. If we accept a person or a fact, the person or the fact remains undisturbed in its position, without any subjective associations to moderate our view. But, if we apply our critical faculties to the consideration of the person or the fact, then our relation to the subject of our inquiry is at once changed. It receives a different value, because we regard it from a different standpoint. The modern standpoint in regard to religion is private judgment rather than authority. We do not accept and then criticize, but we criticize before we accept, which often means non-acceptance. But criticism loses an important support if it is not based on original acceptance. If I make a subject my own, I can bring my experience to bear on my criticism, I

discuss what I know. But, if I criticize from outside, I rely partly on what I do not know. Faith is subjective criticism, doubt is objective criticism. This does not mean that faith is standardized acceptance, it means that faith is development of thought and feeling, organized acceptance. It does not mean that doubt is unprejudiced, but that doubt is deprived of sufficient premisses.

In the reasonable training of children, we begin with faith. We give them axioms, not proofs, and this does not weaken the child's logical power, but gives him a basis for future reasoning. He is storing his material, of which he will one day make fuller use. Faith is equally essential in all the relations of life. It does not beg the question, but it starts the question, and leaves it to establish itself by its own reasonableness. It does not prejudge the question, but it makes the question judge itself.

In the sphere of religion, our Lord, according to S. John, adopted this method. He said that He did not judge men, but that He left them to judge themselves. They did so by their own actions. They did so by the side that they took on the crucial question of good and evil, of light and darkness. Their life was a picture of their character, their actions were a picture of their creed.

Now it is possible first to act and then to evolve a creed, first to live and then to consider character, or, on the other hand, to begin with creed and character and to base activity on these. The modern method is to adopt the first course, the critical rather than the believing course. And the result is disastrous to the creed. For this method leaves out of view the basis of life, which is only practical so far as it harmonizes with the nature of human personality. An organism depends on its innate characteristics, as well as on its environment. Each reacts on the other, the organism on its environment, and the environment on the organism. We have to take note of what we are, otherwise we act in the dark

and make mistakes. Hence the advice, "Know thyself." Religion has taught us self-knowledge, it has taught us the part that God takes in our life. It has taught us facts about our nature, which are of real importance in the determination of ourselves. If we ignore these, we are ignoring our proper relation to our environment, we are emphasizing the environment to the disadvantage of the organism.

This, of course, raises the question of revelation, but that question cannot be settled by dismissing it. It is not even like a new theory, which may involve a certain readjustment of our view of a subject, but it is a question of reconstruction, it is a new view of life. Its truth can only be tested in actual life, and in actual life it will judge itself. Hence faith is the only condition of its consideration, not mere criticism. I must live it, not merely reflect upon it. I can only reflect upon it by living it. This is what modern criticism refuses to do, and so we get the statement, "Miracles do not happen, the Incarnation is not a fact, because it is impossible." If, on the other hand, the Incarnation were a mere statement, there would be some reason in this critical attitude, because a mere statement can fairly be met by opposing arguments to it, and can be refuted by proof. But here it is claimed that we have a fact which enters into life, which we could not have known without revelation, but which, on being revealed, proves itself. The argument is not merely from a book, but from experience. We account for the phenomenon of Christianity when we look at the results of Christianity. The results are found in character, their corroboration is found in the book. The book is a witness to life. Faith therefore is the acceptance of the facts of life, the acknowledgment of a certain explanation of them. It is a working explanation that is set before us, and it can only be tested in the working. In simple language, we must believe it to be true before we can prove it to be true.

Now this is what the modern position so often refuses to do. It adopts the non-committal attitude: it must prove the point before accepting it, before acting upon it. And yet life is a continuous series of assumptions, which prove their truth by experience. Religion is not one of the many interesting subjects offered as studies by life, but it is a definite and a special explanation of life, which can only be justified in the process of life. *Solvitur ambulando.* Therefore to isolate it from life and to consider it as a subject of discussion is no solution of its meaning, and gives only an academic proof of its reality. Its validity depends upon its practice. We can, of course, discuss the question whether the Incarnation is likely to be true, but we can only live it as a proof of its truth. Those who dissect the question forget that it is a unique phenomenon. But the fact that it is unique does not preclude its universality. Its universal application necessitates the appeal to experience. We need to see how it applies to many different cases. The Incarnation claims to deal with humanity. God has become man, not a man, and therefore the fact affects all men. We can discuss that question, but, if we limit ourselves to discussion, we do not really appreciate the significance of the fact.

But exactly the opposite method has been adopted in some quarters in reference to the European War. It has been assumed that the fact of the war disproves the existence of God. This is assuming God's existence and then using a certain experience as an argument against the assumption. It would be fairer to range over the whole field of history, and consider whether history in general disproves God's existence. But suppose we not only assume the Incarnation but apply it to our consideration of the European War. Is the war an argument for or against the intervention of God in humanity, which is what we understand by the Divine assumption of humanity? Christ has to do with all human ex-

perience, and His intervention does not interfere with human free-will. By the exercise of His own will He devoted Himself to the observance of God's will, but that was a matter of deliberate choice. We, too, have to exercise choice, and, in exercising it, we are exposed to temptation. So also was He. He overcame temptation, we do not always overcome it. We give in to the force of evil, not relying sufficiently, as He did, on the force of good. But in the war we have seen the prevalence of each influence, though we claim to see the predominance of good. Are we to say that God does not exist because we see that evil exists? At least, if we cannot account for the existence of evil, we can acknowledge that it allows the exercise of free-will and so constitutes a test for distinguishing between a desire for evil and a desire for good. When our Lord assumed humanity, He did put Himself into the position of choosing between good and evil, and He also emphasized our power of choosing good rather than evil. But He did not force us, and to say that He does not exist, because certain men choose evil, is no legitimate assumption. We cannot explain away the Incarnation in this fashion, though we might say that what it is able to do is often hindered by human self-will. It is no argument against it that its influence lies in persuasion rather than compulsion.

But another argument against Christianity is its failure to capture the whole world. This again is no disproof of the Incarnation. For the influence of Christianity has been indirect as well as direct, and the debt of civilization to Christianity is a claim that cannot be ignored. Even those who consciously set themselves against Christianity have been unconsciously influenced by it. They may have within them a Christian tendency which they do not recognize. We claim that this tendency springs from the Incarnation, as an internal factor in human nature, as well as an external influence. In spite of human resistance, obstinacy, indifference, Christianity has done a great work. It has fostered education, it has

raised the position of women, it has removed slavery, it has stimulated philanthropy. Considering the outward opposition, we may attribute something of this to internal impulsion. Besides, what Christianity has done is not a measure of what it will do. Improvement is gradual, as all natural processes are gradual.

In the early years of Christianity, the mission work of S. Paul was a wonderful phenomenon. Are we to attribute his success to his external conception of Christ, or must we accept his own explanation, "Christ in me, I in Christ"? Is S. John's mysticism unreal: does Christ abide in us, if we abide in Him? The Synoptists tell us plainly of Christ's mission to the Gentiles, and yet He Himself was careful to limit His work to the Jews. May we not explain the later extension of Christian influence by attributing it to Christ's personality working like leaven in the meal of humanity? Aided indeed by human effort, but by human effort Divinely inspired, human effort directed by Divine influence.

There is a tendency in modern thought to exaggerate human power on the material side, and to minimize spiritual power. The supporters of the Incarnation extend the fact of the Word become flesh to the complete sphere of humanity. Their idea of value is moral and spiritual, and in what is material they see a spiritual significance. They do not confuse comfort with improvement, or civilization with development, because such improvement and development may be largely external. When it is said that Christianity is not up to date, it should be remembered that the disqualification may lie in the critics of Christianity rather than in the religion. A material view of life may be the disqualification, and may be a full explanation of the rejection of a spiritual influence. The need of reconstruction may lie in the personalities concerned, not in the scheme which they are rejecting. It has been objected that we need a different presentation of religion, that this

has been proved by religious experience at the front. This is an argument in favour of the Christian religion. It has shown itself capable of getting a hold upon those who are prepared to receive it. And the noticeable phenomenon has been the change in the personal conception of Christ. This has been expressed in the well-known lines, "Christ in Flanders":

> And, all the while, in street or lane or byway—
> in country lane, or city street, or byway—
> You walked among us, and we did not see.
> Your feet were bleeding as You walked our pavements—
> how did we miss Your Footprints on our pavements?
> Can there be other folk as blind as we?
>
> *Now* we remember: over here in Flanders—
> (it isn't strange to think of *You* in Flanders)—
> this hideous warfare seems to make things clear.
> We never thought about You much in England—
> but, now that we are far away from England,
> we have no doubts, we know that *You* are here.

To some this conception of Christ is a delusion, or at least an illusion. To others it is a proof of the presence of Christ: it seems to them to betoken His influence on humanity, and so to justify their belief in His connexion with humanity. They take it as an assurance of His personality. They regard it as the substantiation of His claim, "Lo! I am with you all the days, even unto the consummation of the age." That claim indeed helps to explain the apparent slowness of the growth of Christianity—the consummation of the age. It is not time that counts in religion, it is development apart from time. If life is eternal (belonging to the age), then the important point is its quality, and our relation to God depends for its value on its quality. The dominant factor in the age introduced by the Incarnation is the personality of Christ. To question that is to question the reality of the Christian movement. To recognize that is to prove oneself a supporter of the Christian movement.

So, then, it is not a question how Christianity is

presented at a given period, but what is our attitude to the personality of Christ. Critics of Christianity are not attacking the religion, they are attacking Christ. Their criticism is but a veiled repetition of the cry, *écrasez l'infâme*. And our answer to it is that the attempt is not merely hostile, but unnatural. It is an unconscious repudiation of their own nature. It is of no use to rank Christianity with other religions, because its claims are quite different from theirs. They provide a method of life, this provides a reconstruction of life. From time to time various persons have attempted to found religious societies, which they have called churches, but these have not fulfilled the one requirement of a church—the Church—that it must spring directly from Christ's personality. "Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church." Therefore we say that any attack on religion fails, unless it is an attack on Christ, and then its failure is assured. Unless it is directed against Christ, it misses the point, and, if it is directed against Christ, it is powerless. It was not as a human society that He declared His Church invulnerable to the assault of the gates of Hades, but as the embodiment of His own personality.

But the attack does sometimes seem to take this personal form, as when doubt is thrown on the virgin Birth or the Resurrection. Now it is not quite clear what this kind of criticism means. It looks like an exaggerated emphasis on Christ's humanity, intended to minimize or abolish His Divinity. But neither S. Paul nor S. John brings the virgin Birth into his presentation of Christianity, though each of them can be held to imply it. On the other side there are arguments to prove its necessary inclusion in any recognition of the reality of Christ's existence. The merely historical sense, quite apart from the religious sense, becomes equally non-existent with Christ's non-existence. But probably the Resurrection stands on a different basis, and the denial of this fact carries with it a denial of Christ's Divinity. We should

have to set S. Paul and S. John aside, especially S. Paul. But this question depends even more than the other on evidence. The evidence is not merely historical but religious, it is evidence from religious experience. The influence of Christ on human personality is evidence for His own personality. Constantly in S. John's Gospel He describes Himself in the phrase "I am." In that phrase He has expressed Himself in human experience, and He has justified His claim to Divinity. Forms of worship fade into comparative insignificance before this sovereign claim upon humanity. But it has included a claim to humanity as well, based upon His power to satisfy human needs, and therefore we appeal to experience in proof of the Incarnation.

The uniqueness of the Incarnation applies on both sides. As being unique it has a special effect, and as being unique it cannot be criticized by analogy. The discovery of an unknown planet has been aided by indications suggesting an undiscovered influence. The indications of human experience suggest a similarly needed influence. Supply the influence, and you get the required explanation of the experience. Thus the evidence of the Incarnation is not merely historical. It has often been maintained that the removal of the Gospels would not remove Christianity. But the absence of religious experience would indeed discredit the Gospels, and conversely its presence is a convincing proof of Christianity. It may be said, however, that so very technical a phenomenon requires more direct and definite proof. But there are only two factors in the Incarnation, Divinity and humanity. Trace the influence of these in human experience, and the thesis is established. It is claimed that both these traces are found. It is claimed that both these traces were to be expected. The abundant indications of a sense of God's presence, and the persistent development of humanity in terms of that sense, are the proof of the first claim. S. John and S. Paul prove the second claim. The

religion of the Incarnation has established both its reasonableness and its power.

But, say the critics, the Incarnation is out of date. No, reply its supporters, the critics are behind the times. They have confused natural law with spiritual law, or, rather, they have confused two different values. They are behind the times in having lost the sense of value. Moral value, religious value, have a definite existence in the world of reality. Relation has a definite existence in the world of reality. You cannot prove religious value, any more than you can prove the relation of God to man, but you can shew that reality is unthinkable without the one and the other. The Jews were not illogical when they stated the existence of God in the terms "I am," nor was Christ illogical when He presented Himself in the same terms. It was a premiss, but it is a proof axiom. It explains life, for it is life. Divinity is life, humanity is life, religion is life. The life was the light of men. It is still the light of those who lead the incarnate life.

For the Incarnation is a practice rather than a doctrine. This applies to all doctrine, but especially to a doctrine that directly affects human nature. For the Incarnation is internal, not external. Other religions have provided rules for the guidance of life: the Christian religion has supplied, and does supply, life itself. We talk of literature and of music entering into our life, but here is a personal influence already operating within us. Here is life within our life. It is possible to deny its presence, and the very denial hampers the operation. Christianity is the sense of this presence. The original call of Christianity was a call to repentance, to a change of thought, but this change has to work in the three directions of thought and feeling and will. Repentance is not mere regret for the past, it is rather a hold upon the present in the light of, and it may be in spite of, the past. In this sense it is quite right that our religion should be up to date. In what we

are we express our religion. But we do not express it by tearing ourselves away from the past, if by the past is meant something that does not enter into our calculations. That would be to destroy the continuity of life and to isolate present time and space from their proper place in relation to life. Life is eternal, not merely in respect of time, but in respect of quality. To ignore the existence of God is to be out of date : to ignore the presence of God is to deny His very existence.

The Incarnation asserts the presence of God. Without confusing natural law with spiritual law, it maintains the relation of the one to the other, because it maintains the relation of humanity to Divinity. No conception of the claims of humanity will be true or valid without a true and valid conception of the relation of humanity to Divinity.

If it is said that the Incarnation is a restatement of Divinity, the answer is that it is *ipso facto* a reconstruction of humanity as well. The proof of the doctrine is in the practice of it, and the proof of the Incarnation is found in human experience. When Job said, " I know that my Vindicator liveth," he was making the same appeal to human experience. When our Lord says, " I am the Resurrection and the Life," He is justifying that appeal. He is centralizing it in Himself, in humanity and Divinity combined in Him, and the *onus probandi* rests upon those who deny this great factor in human experience, not upon those who know it for a factor and a fact.

CHAPTER XXV

THE TRUE POSITION OF THE INCARNATION IN CHRISTIANITY

Perhaps it may be said that we can advance no further the position that we have assigned to the Incarnation. We have maintained that it is an inherent power within us, which provides us with a basis on which to found our acceptance of the Christian religion. This implies a certain character in humanity, but it also implies a certain capacity for approach to Divinity. It is the approach to Divinity that is the end of the Incarnation, in other words, union with Christ. The Incarnation provides a basis of humanity, but it also provides an ideal of humanity. The ideal depends on the basis. The important injunction of our Lord, "Abide in Me, and I in you," an injunction supported by a promise, expresses both the basis and the ideal. The union of the Christian with Christ depends upon his capacity for that union, but he knows that he is not only provided with power to secure the union but supported all through the process of securing it. Christ is with him from the beginning to the end, and Christ is the end of the process. But this co-operative principle is grounded in the Incarnation, for in that great fact the co-operation has its beginning. Thus may be explained the saying of Christ, "No one can come unto Me, unless the Father Who sent Me draw him," and the parallel saying, "I will draw all men to Myself." For it is above all in the Incarnation that the approach to humanity, which precedes and

assures the attraction of humanity, takes place. The constitution of human nature does not alienate it from God, but it keeps human nature at a distance from God. Transcendence, apart from the Incarnation, is an obstacle to immanence. But in the Incarnation transcendence and immanence meet. They are presented in the phenomenon of the Incarnation and their compatibility is proved by the results of the Incarnation.

The denial of the Incarnation keeps them separate, but the practice of the Incarnation proves their separate and combined value. For each Christian may and must appropriate the immanence of Christ, while still he worships Him as God. He worships One Whom he feels ever nearer to himself. It has been well said that man is the expression of God, that in man God is being fulfilled. The thought binds us still closer to God, for we feel that we are not isolated, but parts of the great scheme of the universe, necessary factors in its complete development. Thus the Incarnation fosters in us the feeling of self-respect. It encourages the principle of *noblesse oblige*, it stimulates us to rise to the occasion.

Why do we respect ourselves? Not merely because we have the privilege of helping God, but even more because we have the character, the qualification of co-operation. We recognize our likeness, our kinship to God.

Does this encourage or deaden the sense of sin? Our kinship to God rests upon the union of humanity with Divinity. This union, working in us, sets both sides of the relation in a clearer light. It reveals Divinity, but it deepens our sense of our humanity. It is a relation of contrast, as well as of likeness. The contrast quickens the sense of sin. Seeing humanity as it may be and ought to be, we get a clearer view of humanity as it is. The ideal of humanity contrasted with the conditions of humanity constitutes a sense of sin. For it produces knowledge, and knowledge deals with evil as well as good. It is

those who have most affinity with good that are most conscious of evil. It is not because they have most experience of it, but because they are most alive to their experience. The pure in heart, who see God, are most conscious of sin. Thus the sense of sin and the sense of God's presence are found side by side, and the union of humanity and Divinity emphasizes the revolt from evil and the desire of good. Herein lies the practical value of the Incarnation. It attracts our humanity towards God, and it elevates our humanity. It opens our eyes to the value of the one and the other.

The Incarnation is an incentive and an inspiration. Its influence is from without and from within. It is both ideal and practical, but its power of example is outstripped by its contribution of life. It is more effective in feeling than in knowledge. But what are we to say of its influence on the will, of its directing influence? Religion is an adequate grasp of the relation between man and God, including God's actual attitude to man and man's reasonable attitude to God. The Incarnation has revealed God's attitude and determined man's attitude. So far it has changed the relation between God and man. We are bound to regard it as an extension of revelation and as a direction of human acceptance of revelation. We have more to know and feel, and we have more facility for knowledge and feeling. The personality of God is clearer, the personality of man is more efficient. Thus from a double point of view an impetus is given to human faculties. They have a higher ideal and a fuller power of realizing it. Thus the Incarnation stimulates the will. The will selects that object which appeals to it as most deserving of attainment. But in the appeal we have to consider the modification introduced by the personal equation. Personal pleasure may play an important part in determining the selection of the object. A man does not always take what he knows to be the best decision. He allows one side of his

nature to prejudice him in his choice, he errs, as we say, against his better self. But, if we believe that the quality of human nature has been definitely improved by the Incarnation, we claim that the bias towards spiritual determination is emphasized thereby. A man tends to give more weight to the spiritual side of his nature, he is less liable to be led astray by his physical proclivities. He is more ready to preserve the balance of his personality, now that his personality has received a definite impulse in the direction of life in the highest sense.

The will is the most important factor in human activity. In the last resort it really directs activity. If the Incarnation is specially concerned with activity, its influence will specially affect the will. It is said that the will is to be regarded as the original form of consciousness. "If will is understood in the wider sense, as all activity determined by feeling and cognition, it may be said that the whole conscious life is gathered up in the will as its fullest expression." "There will always be present (if not in the individual, in the race) an obscure impulse leading beyond what is scattered, one-sided, and conflicting, to an inner harmony of the deepest mental currents." The contention is that the Incarnation not only affects feeling and cognition in an external way, but rather has an internal and even an unconscious influence upon them. We Christians cannot regard the impulse as obscure, even when it is unconscious. For it is possible deliberately and definitely to analyse the phenomenon of the determination of the will in the direction of religious effort. We have instances of religious devotion which go beyond the explanation of external persuasion and influence. Surely the essential difference between Old Testament and New Testament religion lies in the inward impulse, replacing external obligation. There is no question of the sincerity of the Jewish prophets, nor indeed of their consciousness of Divine inspiration, but they felt this

as an additional obligation, not as a part of their very nature. The Lord spoke to them, and they handed on His words. But S. Paul claims, "We have the mind of Christ." The voice of God does not represent so intimate a relation as the mind of Christ. The Jew might be exhorted to cleave to the Lord, but the Christian is exhorted to abide in Christ, and at the same time he is assured that Christ abides in him. There is some kinship of man to God which cannot be accounted for merely by the possession of a spirit, breathed into him, as the Jews maintained, by God. Divine immanence is not a part of Jewish belief, but Divine immanence does account for the determination of the will in the direction of religious devotion, personal devotion of one personality to another, which one school of religious thought calls conversion. It would be more correct to say that the conversion, which is really attraction, has already taken place, as being definitely present in potentiality, present in tendency. It is the tendency that counts, that is the effect of the Incarnation. It cannot be proved, but it accounts for the phenomena of experience. It explains the attitude taken up by S. John and S. Paul. They at least have the claim of expert knowledge and experience. They are more likely to be right than critics whose experience is negative. How are we to explain such a contention as this? "The reason why the generations of the saints have loved and worshipped Jesus has not been because He has left them a tender and glorious memory, but because He has done to one and all of them, each in his own day, an infinite personal service. No conception of Christ is adequate which does not recognize, in addition to what He was and did in Palestine nineteen hundred years ago, what He is and what He is doing at the present hour." His action and His purpose are stated in these words of His, "that they may be one, as We are one." Not one person, but a unity, a combination of indi-

viduals reproducing the unity of God. Such a unity can only be produced by a change of nature, an inherent union of man with God. Or rather, such a union implies and involves a reconstructed nature, such a reconstruction of nature as makes such a union possible. It is dependent on more than external influence, otherwise it will not be an organic connexion.

By the Incarnation God drew humanity within Himself. He, the centre of a personal religion, brought His personality into relation with human personality. That change of relation transformed humanity, transformed each human personality. It gave each personality power to grow, and so to realize and effect the relation. We cannot draw near to God except through Christ, and it is our likeness to Christ, our participation in His nature, that makes us capable of drawing near to God. The Father draws each Christian through Christ to Himself.

Thus our Christianity depends upon the Incarnation. It is not that we have heard of the Incarnation, but that we have it as an inward experience, it is this that tells. As the kingdom of God, it is within us. The kingship or sovereignty of God is not to be located at any external point here or there, but it is to be located, because it is already established, within our very personality. It may be, and it is, a fact that when we realize the potency of the Incarnation we apply it to ourselves, but its external potency is derived from its internal potency : we grow from within. This is indicated by such a phrase as " the children of God." In Baptism we take up our freedom, we have our spiritual tendency determined, we realize our power of growth. The very fact of Baptism is an argument for this spiritual tendency, it is able to direct the tendency because the tendency is already there. The very fact of Communion is an argument for this spiritual tendency, it is able to strengthen the tendency because

the tendency is already there. Our sense of the presence of Christ in us assures the quickening of our sense of His presence. The Incarnation is the first-fruits, the earnest of our union with Christ, it is the foundation on which the superstructure is raised. More exactly, it plants the germ of Christian growth.

Our Lord said that He is the Vine and that we are the branches. Here is a clear indication of organic growth. Had He come as a mere teacher, He could not have described the relation of His disciples to Him in these terms. He said that we belong to Him, that we are a part of Him, He set forth Himself in definite terms as a personality underlying our personality. The life was the light of men. Light is an external influence, life is an internal influence. The Incarnation works in both ways, but it works as a living light, as an enlightening life. It will never come to its own until it is recognized as an organic factor, which, having reconstructed human nature, is the condition of religious development. Religion is a development, not an accession. We do not add it as an extra subject for the consideration of our thought and feeling, but we have it as the internal activity of our consciousness, the determining expression of our will. And so it enables our voluntary purpose. It is not automatic, for it does not destroy free-will. But, feeling God within him, each personality decides for himself whether he will respond to the potentiality of his nature and express it in activity. He has the germ of an activity within him, and he is neither the sport of a mechanical influence, nor the prey of an irresistible impulse. The influence is natural, not mechanical, organic not external. The impulse is powerful but not irresistible, for the lower human nature remains. But in all our struggle God gives us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The principle of *noblesse oblige* holds in religion as in chivalry, only the nobility is an inherent characteristic, not an extraneous quality. It is there,

within us, waiting for us to give it expression. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? cried S. Paul, and he acknowledged that there is no external influence that can do so, if we recognize our capacity. Our actual possession of life is our assurance of God's love for us, and that is recognized by our belief, so that, if we believe, we may be said to have life, because we are expressing that life in our belief. There have been and there are many explanations of the nature of Christ, but the question for us rather is, how far we acknowledge the influence of His personality on ours, than what exactly we define His nature to be. If we allow that the Word became flesh, and then extend this fact to every human personality as included in the humanity which our Lord assumed, then we need not argue about the exact proportion in which Divinity and humanity were combined. But, if God assumed humanity to stand outside humanity, then we cannot account for the phenomenon at all, we do not understand why He adopted the process.

It is impossible to conceive the Incarnation as an external fact, an incident in history, even religious history. As a theory, it does not justify its recognized influence on religious experience. But as a fact in the world of nature, in religious experience, in the development of human nature, and human religious experience, it justifies itself by its results. To explain Christianity as a religious influence, only by reference to the life of Jesus, is, as has been well said, only a mutilated description. Such an explanation "remains *a torso*, it is ludicrously inadequate, and still more completely does it fail to explain the spiritual sovereignty of Jesus in the modern world."

It is not the historical life of Jesus that has won so many—they are few enough—to Christianity, not even the life that includes the acceptance of the Incarnation, but it is the incarnate power of Christ which we inherit as our possession, which is part of our very nature, which is the life of our life—it is this

that makes us Christian. For it binds us to Christ in an indissoluble union, and it explains to us the life that we read and the Incarnation that that life includes.

It is not the historical Incarnation that counts, not the doctrinal Incarnation, but the organic Incarnation, which is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, and even more spirit of our spirit. It is the personal Incarnation that counts, whereby our personality partakes of the personality of God, which God has revealed to us, not merely by a literary revelation, but by a living communication that is Christ in us. It is part of our feeling, part of our thought, but, above all, part of our will. In our self-consciousness, expressing ourselves, we express Christ, because, when we devote ourselves to Him, we are developing the germ which He has planted. Hence we may well apply to religious activity the maxim, "Know thyself." We must not separate ourselves and our own tendencies from a new and external tendency that we may choose to call religion, but we must recognize that the best and strongest and most living tendency for us is that which we have within us, not outside ourselves, a life within our own life, produced not by physical means, not by human agency, but by the will and act of God. Christ can never be regarded, like Buddha or Muhammad, as the mere founder of a new religion. The Christian religion is a unique phenomenon, there is no analogy by which we may relate it to other religions. It is *the* religion, and this unique position it owes to the Incarnation. Centred in Christ's person, it depends for its efficacy upon His personal influence. Dominated entirely by His personality, it rests on no external commendations, but on His intimate relation to each of His followers. Time and place have no power to affect their connexion with Him, which is apart from temporal and local conditions. Whenever they are and wherever they are, they draw their life from Him, and He is their life.

In an unbroken succession countless human personalities have made their appearance in time and space, containing the precious germ of life. Near or far, in the first century or in the twentieth, in Palestine or in north-western Europe, on Jesus's breast or in the solitude of their own souls, they have treasured, with human imperfection, this gift of life. As they have lived, so they have loved. Their life has been the proof of the Life that they have received and transmitted, and their love has been the measure of the great fact that God is Love. They have lived the incarnate life, not indeed as Christ lived it, but by inheritance and by the devotion of their will to His. In their nature they have expressed His, imperfectly expressed His perfect nature. They are the children of God, but the Incarnation has been the basis of their sonship, and they have handed on the torch kindled for them from the Light of the world. They prove the Incarnation to be a fact, and looking at their lives we see in them Christ the Life.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE PRACTICE OF THE INCARNATION

It has been said that the crying need of our age is the sense of sin, which is indeed true from the negative point of view. But from the positive point of view we might say that our deepest need is the sense of God. The fact of the Incarnation, when it is really grasped, produces the sense of God within us. That, above all, establishes our self-respect, and it is the feeling of self-respect that brings out the best that is in us. Our Lord said, in reference to the Jewish law, "I am not come to destroy but to complete," and this statement accurately describes His whole human method. In religion His method was development, and in human nature His method was development. He came, not to re-create, but to reconstruct. He took the whole of personality, body and spirit, and He gave it fresh Divine life, so that He might save the soul and enable each of us by co-operation with God to save his soul. And so He differs from the ordinary prophet, whose mission was external, for He works upon us from within. The disciples, grieved at the idea of His leaving them, were consoled with the promise that He would send to them His Holy Spirit, but they were also encouraged by the assurance that He Himself would come to them. The Holy Spirit would remind them of the words which He Himself had spoken to them. That is to say, the Holy Spirit would appeal to the power that was already in them. He would appeal

to their very nature, He would enable them to use the material that they already possessed. He would help them to develop themselves, to develop their personality on the lines of its reconstruction.

It is often forgotten that we have this endowment of internal reconstruction. We apply to God to help us from without, we do not set ourselves to co-operate with Him from within. God always answers us by appealing to ourselves. The cure of all our ills lies in the proper use of ourselves. What we may be depends upon what we are, upon our power of adapting ourselves to new conditions. In each case the lines of development are relative to the personality that has been reconstructed. The Incarnation has relaid the lines of development. It has not simply shown the way in which they should be laid, but it has done the preliminary work itself. It has provided a new basis for the personality, and the new basis is life, the life proceeding from the Incarnate God. "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." Thus our Lord explains that He is the door of the sheep, thus He shews that life is the means of entrance into His flock. So that our answer to God's appeal is not mere self-assertion, but it is the application of the Divinely implanted tendency of our nature to meet His call upon us. What is often called conversion is really self-determination, conditioned by our actual connexion with God, our possession of life.

This it is that informs our personality, and this therefore directs our activity. For only in activity does a really effective personality express itself. The phenomenon that meets us is the particular method of God's influence. It works from within rather than from without. This makes our activity more spontaneous than it would have been according to the other method. There is, indeed, the question why upon this principle Christianity is not more effective in its results. But this organic qualification does act mechanically. It is an equipment, not an auto-

matic impulse. The power of impulse is in it, but its activity depends on our self-determined use of it. It depends also on our consciousness of it. By life we live, according as we know that we have life.

Life eternal is to know God and Christ. To know Christ is to know Him in us. By His gift of life He has imparted Himself. "That which has been made was life in Him,"—this is S. John's explanation of the Incarnation. It may indeed be asked, How is it that we are not more conscious of the possession of life? Surely sensitive and sensible creatures, so blessed with the richest of blessings, must spontaneously blossom out into the fruits of an ideal activity? But it must be remembered that there is a fatal check to the complete development of our personality. Whatever the gift of God, we have still a two-sided nature. We have S. Paul's famous antithesis of the body and the spirit, and the highest spiritual equipment is still conditioned by material instrumentality. The Incarnation does not profess to destroy the antagonism, it only professes to weaken it. There is still need of effort, only the effort, if it is sincere, is likely to be more effective. It does not follow that, because we can do more, therefore we will do more. But it does follow that we ought to do more. When we make the effort, we actually do more. We assert our spirit against the domination of the body, and our spirit, through the life that God has implanted in it, prevails. This is the triumph of our personality, which achieves its victory within itself by the power of God. In this case we are acting on our own knowledge, we are asserting ourselves, but we are using the power that is contained in our own nature, and so we call our action inwardly determined.

Those who allow themselves to express the best that they feel within them may be said to practise the Incarnation. They apply in action the result

of the closest relation of God to man, of man to God. God working in them governs their activity. They are His and they feel that they are His. But their activity is grounded on the principle of development. They are entrusted with a talent which He expects them to put out to use. It is *le talent de bien faire*. Under this obligation, which binds them to the good that is in the world and separates them from the evil, they realize and actualize their Christian activity. The love of Christ embodied in the nature of Christ constrains them. The obligation has a racial, social, and personal power. Attached to humanity, it penetrates each human personality. Each personality, recognizing the obligation and actualizing the obligation, uplifts the nation, the Church, the individual. The Holy Spirit, the vital influence of God, works by this means the consummation of life. It is not merely an enthusiasm, it is rather a progressive energy, it is God's means of perfecting human co-operation with Him. It is the motive power of activity, without which the scheme of the world could not be worked out. It is our means of contributing to the success of the scheme of the world. By it we are connected with God and by it we work with God. By it love is expressed and love is produced.

Perhaps it is this fact that accounts for the deadness of religion, so often charged against individual and collected Christians. In itself it should argue religious vitality, and so it would if life were a merely mechanical force. But life is potential activity, and actual activity depends on the determination of personality. In other words, the use of life is in self-consciousness, the direction of life is in self-consciousness. We must apply the Incarnation to our self-consciousness. We must adapt ourselves to our natural equipment, and apply our nature to our environment. We are constituted within, we are not at the mercy of our environment. We are able to influence our environment, at the same time that

it also reacts upon ourselves. Thus we see the importance of the training of character. Character uses its original endowment, and, while it is impressed by outward influences, it develops on its own lines.

But our realization of life within us gives us confidence, bids us look forward to the future, rouses our feelings. It produces and develops faith, hope and love. These virtues are learnt in the training-school of the Incarnation, and practised in active life. In our practice of them we see man united with God, for life in its development, as in its original communication, is the union of man with God. For we not only have the Incarnation within us, but we see it all around us. Thus it is part of our activity to recognize the Incarnation both within and without. But the crown of the glory is within. We take note of God's immanence in Nature, but we live by His immanence in us. Outside we see more of His transcendence, within we acknowledge His transcendence, but we feel His working. The practice of the Incarnation depends on feeling. The actualization of feeling is an effort of will. Thought works with both. The three together constitute activity, and, as we think of God and feel His power and determine to work with Him, we fulfil the purpose of the Incarnation. They truly believe in the Incarnation who work out in themselves the Incarnate life.

How far are S. Paul and S. John our guides in this activity? S. Paul believed that Christ was in him and he in Christ. He insisted on the importance of faith. But he did not minimize the value of works. S. John has taught us to abide in Christ as the effectualizing of His abiding in us. He does not mean that the process begins from us, but that what we do will confirm and develop what He has begun. He insists on the efficacy of love. Love is a mutual feeling, it is the acknowledgment on both sides of the relation existing between man and God. I believe,

therefore I act : I love, therefore I act. I apply my will to what I know and feel.

In the life of Christ thought and feeling had their place, but the predominating influence was His will. He determined to do the will of God. So it must be with us. Our mind may lead us to believe in the fact of the Word become flesh, our feeling may incite us to interest in the fact, but our will must determine us to make it the motive of our activity.

We see the power of will in the very common quality of obstinacy. But this acts unreasonably : the motive may be strong, but it may not be grounded on reason, which may be replaced by habit or mere egotism. It may be dependent on feeling, but feeling may be mere sentiment or unbalanced emotion. These are matters of training. But those who recognize an impulse from within are ready to submit both thought and feeling to that impulse, they are ready to allow themselves to be wholly guided by that impulse. It is the controlling influence within their personality, it is their real personality asserting itself. It is their standard of value, the standard which determines their whole system of values. For the Incarnation is a revaluation of life, a transformation of values. It has raised us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It has set good deliberately over against evil, and drawn out the contrast in favour of good. It has set God within us and given us an ever-present determining influence. God works on the side of good, and, if God is in us, then it is no longer we who live, but God. Thus, when we recognize our real life, we live not to ourselves but to God. This is the practice of the Incarnation, the triumph of good over evil, the enlistment of man in the service of God. It is the call upon each man to contribute his personality to the cause of God. It is the raising in each case of the value of the contribution. It is the increase of the inclination to make the contribution.

Supposing, then, that we recognize the Incarnation

as a fact, supposing that we realize its influence upon our very nature, what motive will induce us to practise the Incarnation? The realization of God in us. "I can do all things in Him that enableth me" is the feeling that supplies the motive. The realization of union with Christ supplies the motive, because it gives the consciousness of the power. But the original union with Christ supplies the power. The practice of the Incarnation does not depend upon merely external influence, although that can quicken our perception of the power and stimulate our application of it. There are three factors in the development of life—spiritual renewal of the mind, love kindled by Divine love, and the devotion of the individual will to God. In all effective activity, thought and feeling must incline and support the will.

"I am come to do Thy will, O God." What Christ has done, man is now able to attempt to do. The Incarnation is not a phase or an episode, not a creed or a dogma: it is a vital fact. The Incarnation is Jesus Christ Himself, in Whom is reality and life, Who is the Reality and the Life, the real and living Way that leads men on to God. That glorious personality, which has been for nineteen centuries the light of their upward, heavenly tending, stands as no mere model of self-devotion, however real and living that model has ever been. It has been the drawback even of many a sincere follower of Christ that he has failed to realize in all its fulness the living reality of the Incarnation. He has looked too much outside himself, and, though he has not looked in vain, he has missed the deepest significance of his religion. For he has missed his Master's personal presence in his own personality. But when, feeling in himself the power of the incarnate life, and discerning in himself the highest form of activity, and seeing in himself a light that he recognizes as Divine, he devotes his will to his Master's service, then the Incarnation becomes to him what it is—it becomes life in him. Then, beholding Christ's presence in

righteousness, he is confident that he will be satisfied, when he awakes, with the full enjoyment of that Incarnate presence which has been his life and light.

> "God dropped a spark down into every one,
> and, if we find and fan it to a blaze,
> it'll spring up and glow like—like the sun—
> and light the wandering out of stony ways."

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